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ABSTRACT

Separating George Washington the man from Washington the legend is difficult for historians and students alike because his fame complicates historical scrutiny. Washington owned slaves and ambitiously sought power, yet he freed his slaves upon his death and he used his power to forge a democratic nation. Throughout this unit students examine Washington's letters, public papers, and speeches which reveal the personal traits and leadership qualities that characterized the man rather than the legend. The unit contains objectives, correlations to the National History Standards, teacher background materials, lesson plans, student resources, and a selected bibliography. Six lessons focus student effort on working with primary source documents to investigate Washington's life and achievements. Lesson titles include: (1) "The Making of a Leader"; (2) "Military Leader: George Washington and the American Revolution"; (3) "George Washington and the Constitution"; (4) "George Washington as President"; (5) "George Washington and the Native Americans"; and (6) "George Washington and Slavery." Although the lessons are recommended for grades 8-12, some of the readings may need to be adapted for effective use by eighth grade students. Contains 15-item selected bibliography. (BT)

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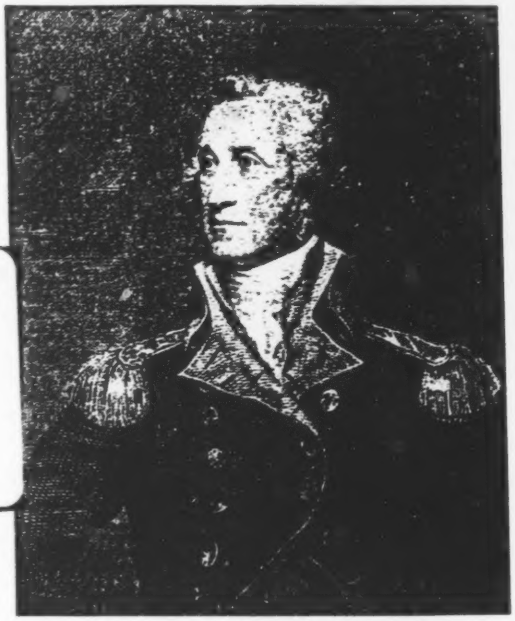
The Great Experiment

George Washington and the American Republic

A Unit of Study for Grades 8–12



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The Great Experiment

George Washington and the American Republic

A Unit of Study for Grades 8–12

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The Huntington
Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens
San Marino, California
and
National Center for History in the Schools
University of California, Los Angeles

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The Huntington Library featured an exhibition commemorating the two-hundredth anniversary of George Washington's death, *THE GREAT EXPERIMENT, George Washington and the American Republic*, from October 1998 through June 1999. A collection of lessons was developed to assist teachers prepare thousands of students to attend the exhibition. Lessons and support materials were prepared and distributed to teachers through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. These lessons were adapted and expanded to produce this teaching unit. The National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS) gratefully acknowledges the support of the directors and staff of The Huntington Library in this endeavor. Special gratitude is due to David S. Zeidberg, R. Stanton & Ernestine Avery Director of the Library, Robert C. Ritchie, W. M. Keck Foundation Director of Research, and Susan Lafferty, Education and Volunteer Services Manager.

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Gary B. Nash, Director of NCHS, oversaw the project and the final editing. Marian McKenna Olivas was the layout and photo editor.

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INTRODUCTION

I. APPROACH AND RATIONALE

In 1998 the Education and Volunteer Services Department of The Huntington Library published a series of lessons on George Washington to accompany the exhibition, *THE GREAT EXPERIMENT, George Washington and the American Republic.* The lessons, based on documents in the exhibition, were prepared to assist secondary teachers in preparing students to visit the exhibition. The NCHS, working with The Huntington Library, has revised the lessons adding new materials and teaching strategies to expand on the original lessons in order to provide a more comprehensive view of the American Republic in the era of George Washington.

The National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS) has developed the following collection of lessons for teaching with primary sources. This adds to more than sixty teaching units that are the fruit of a collaboration between history professors and experienced teachers of United States and World history. They represent specific episodes in history from which you and your students can pause to delve into the deeper meanings of these selected landmark events and explore their wider context in the great historical narrative.

By studying crucial episodes in history the student becomes aware that choices had to be made by real human beings, that those decisions were the result of specific factors, and that they set in motion a series of historical consequences. We have selected dramatic moments that bring alive that decision-making process. We hope that through this approach, your students will realize that history is an ongoing, open-ended process, and that the decisions they make today create the conditions of tomorrow's history.

NCHS teaching units are based on primary sources, taken from documents, artifacts, journals, diaries, newspapers and literature from the period under study. What we hope to achieve using primary source documents in these lessons is to remove the distance that students feel from historical events and to connect them more intimately with the past. In this way we hope to recreate for your students a sense of "being there," a feeling of seeing history through the eyes of the very people who were making decisions. This will help your students develop historical empathy, to realize that history is not an impersonal process divorced from real people like themselves. At the same time, by analyzing primary sources, students will actually practice the historian's craft, discovering for themselves how to analyze evidence, establish a valid interpretation and construct a coherent narrative in which all the relevant factors play a part.

II. CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

Within this unit, you will find: 1) Unit Objectives, 2) Correlation to the National History Standards, 3) Teacher Background Materials, 4) Lesson Plans, 5) Student Resources, and 6) a Selected Bibliography. This unit, as we have said above, focuses on certain key moments in time and should be used as a supplement to your customary course materials. Although these lessons are recommended for grades 8–12, some of the readings will need to be adapted for effective use by eighth grade students.

The teacher background section should provide you with a good overview of the entire unit and with the historical information and context necessary to link the specific "dramatic moment" to the larger historical narrative. You may consult it for your own use, and you may choose to share it with students if they are of a sufficient grade level to understand the materials.

The lesson plans include a variety of ideas and approaches for the teacher which can be elaborated upon or cut as you see the need. These lesson plans contain student resources which accompany each lesson. The resources consist of primary source documents, any handouts or student background materials, and a bibliography.

In our series of teaching units, each collection can be taught in several ways. You can teach all of the lessons offered on any given topic, or you can select and adapt the ones that best support your particular course needs. We have not attempted to be comprehensive or prescriptive in our offerings, but rather to give you an array of enticing possibilities for in-depth study, at varying grade levels. We hope that you will find the lesson plans exciting and stimulating for your classes. We also hope that your students will never again see history as a boring sweep of inevitable facts and meaningless dates but rather as an endless treasure of real life stories, and an exercise in analysis and reconstruction.

TEACHER'S BACKGROUND

I. UNIT OVERVIEW

For two centuries George Washington has been revered as the preeminent Founding Father. Although Washington met many defeats during his life time, and he has had detractors, the record of his extraordinary achievements as a leader remains unparalleled in our national memory. Thus, long before his death on December 14, 1799, Washington's heroic legacy was already firmly fixed in the story of America. Henry Lee eulogized him with the following epitaph, "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

Perhaps Washington's greatest legacy wasn't his brilliant leadership as a Revolutionary War hero or as first President, but rather his reluctance to abuse the power bestowed upon him in an age of absolute power. Washington's biographer, James Thomas Flexner, captured Washington's complexity in his book *Washington: The Indispensable Man*. Flexner wrote that Washington was "a fallible human being made of flesh and blood and spirit—not a statue of marble and wood. And inevitably—for that was the fact—I found a great and good man. In all history few men who possessed unassailable power have used that power so gently and self-effacingly for what their best instincts told them was the welfare of their neighbors and all mankind."

Separating Washington the man from Washington the legend is difficult for historians and students alike, because his fame complicates historical scrutiny. Washington owned slaves and ambitiously sought power, yet he freed his slaves upon his death and he used his power to forge a democratic nation. Abigail Adams was aware of Washington's legendary status and offered the following advice to those who would try to understand him: "Simple truth is his best and his greatest eulogy. She alone can render his fame immortal." Through this unit, students will examine Washington's letters, public papers, and addresses that reveal some of his personal traits and leadership qualities which characterized the man rather than the legend.

The unit consists of six lessons that have students work with primary source documents to investigate Washington's life and achievements. Lessons 1–3 examine his early life, military leadership in the American Revolution, and his role in the Federal Convention of 1787. Lesson 4 uses Washington's Farewell Address to provide a retrospective of his presidential administration. Lessons 5 and 6 delve into Washington's dealings with Native Americans from his first venture into the Virginia frontier through his presidency and his changing attitudes toward the institution of slavery.

II. UNIT CONTEXT

This unit, as a whole, may be used to supplement a study of the American Revolution and the early years of the Republic or can be taken as an in-depth study of George Washington and his role and influence on the development of the American nation. Individual lessons can be used to supplement a study of the Seven Years War, the Revolutionary War, making of the Constitution, or of Washington's presidency.

III. CORRELATION TO NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR UNITED STATES HISTORY

The Great Experiment: George Washington and the American Republic provides teaching materials to support the *National Standards for History, Basic Edition* (National Center for History in the Schools, 1996). Lessons within this unit assist students in attaining Standard 1B of Era 2, the European struggle for control of North America by focusing on the causes, character and outcome of the Seven Years War and analyzing Native American involvement in the war and evaluating the consequences for their societies. The unit likewise supports Standards 1, 2, and 3 of Unit 3 "Revolution and the New Nation" by examining the ideas and interests involved in forging the American Revolution, the Revolution's effects on different social groups, the issues involved in the creation of the United States Constitution, the development of the first American party system, and the influence of the French Revolution on American politics.

The unit integrates a number of Historical Thinking Standards such as analyzing cause-and-effect relationships; assess the importance of the individual in history; explain the influences of ideas, human interests, and beliefs; and, support interpretations with historical evidence.

IV. UNIT OBJECTIVES

- To analyze a variety of primary source materials.
- To evaluate the impact of Washington's military leadership in forging the American victory during the Revolutionary War.
- To examine evidence from letters and public papers that reveal Washington's character traits.
- To assess Washington's leadership in fashioning the office of the presidency.
- To examine Washington's attitude towards Native Americans and explain his position on the institution of slavery.

V. LESSON PLANS

1. The Making of a Leader
2. George Washington as Military Leader
3. George Washington and the Constitution
4. George Washington as President
5. George Washington and Native Americans
6. George Washington and Slavery

VI. USING PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENTS

Before beginning the unit you may wish to duplicate copies of the *Document Analysis Worksheet* (Student Handout 1) as a means of assisting students in working with the numerous documents that are included in the six lessons in this unit. Encourage students to examine the documents carefully. Caution students not to accept without question evidence presented in documents and to always examine documents in the context of the time in which they were written. Students should make a habit of testing the data presented in primary source materials with evidence gleaned from their study of history.

Document Analysis Worksheet

1. Type of Document: (Check one)

____ Image
____ Private Letter
____ Political Cartoon
____ Speech or Public Address

_____ Report to Congress
_____ Map
_____ Artifact
_____ Secondary Source

____Other: please explain____

2. Date(s) of document: ____
3. Author ____
4. For what audience was the document written?____

____

5. Document Information

A. List important pieces of information presented in the document.

____
____
____
____

B. Why was the document written?

____
____
____
____

C. What evidence in the document helped you to determine why it was written? (Quote from the document if appropriate.)

____
____
____
____

D. What historical events does this document refer to?

____
____
____
____

This worksheet is an adaptation of one designed and developed by the staff of the Education Branch, Office of Public Programs, National Archives, Washington, DC.

DRAMATIC MOMENT

In 1755 Major General Edward Braddock's army of some 2,000 British regulars and 500 colonials marched toward Fort Duquesne determined to expel the French from the Ohio Valley. Confident of victory because of his superior force, Braddock refused to heed George Washington's warning of a possible ambush by the French and their Indian allies. On July 9, a considerably smaller French force attacked. Braddock was mortally wounded and virtually every British officer was either killed or wounded. Colonel Washington had been in the heat of battle but, remarkably, was not wounded. The young colonel led the remnants of Braddock's army, now less than 500 men, back to Virginia. In a letter to his brother John Augustine Washington from Fort Cumberland on July 18, a few days after Braddock's death, Washington wrote:

Dear Jack: As I have heard since my arriv'l at this place, a circumstantial acct. of my death and dying speech, I take this early oppertunity of contradicting both, and of assuring you that I now exist and appear in the land of the living by the miraculous care of Providence, that protected me beyond all human expectation; I had 4 Bullets through my Coat, and two Horses shot under me, and yet escaped unhurt.

We have been most scandalously beaten by a trifling body of men; but fatigue and want of time prevents me from giving any of the details till I have the happiness of seeing you at home; which I now most ardently wish for, since we are drove in thus far. A Weak and Feeble state of Health, obliges me to halt here for 2 or 3 days, to recover a little strength, that I may thereby be enabled to proceed homewards with more ease . . . .

I am Dr. Jack, y'r most Affect. Broth'r

Source: George Washington Papers, Library of Congress

On August 17, Rev. Samuel Davies preached a sermon entitled 'Religion and Patriotism the Constituents of a Good Soldier' which was later published in Philadelphia and London. He concluded his sermon with the following words: " I may point out to the public that heroic youth, Colonel Washington, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner for some important service to his country."

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LESSON ONE
THE MAKING OF A LEADER

A. LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To examine the "Rules of Civility" and explain what can be determined from them regarding accepted behavior in eighteenth-century America.
- To explain the character traits that Parson Mason Weems wished to promote in his biography of George Washington
- To delineate the character traits that became Washington's hallmark.

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

George Washington was a physically imposing man—tall and strong—and ambitious from an early age. For many of us, he is an abstract figure, more legendary than real. Washington holds a cherished position in our national memory as Revolutionary War hero and first President. However, Washington's mythological status rests on distinctive qualities that many historians feel were essential to his extraordinary leadership.

Washington, born on February 11, 1732 (the calendar was changed during his lifetime pushing his birthday ahead to February 22), was the eldest of five children of Augustine Washington and his second wife, Mary Ball. Augustine Washington had two sons from his first marriage, Lawrence and Augustine. His father died in 1743 leaving the eleven-year-old a portion of his estate including the 280-acre farm on the Rappahannock River where the family had once lived. George's half-brother, Lawrence, inherited the plantation which Lawrence later named Mount Vernon after Admiral Edward Vernon, his commander in an expedition against the Spanish during King George's War (War of the Austrian Succession, 1740–48).

After his father's death, George had no hope of an education abroad as had been afforded his older half-brothers. Not only was an English education expensive, but his protective mother desired to keep her eldest son at home. His education stressed practical skills rather than training typical for an eighteenth-century gentleman. As a teenager Washington showed an obsession with self-improvement and was conscious of cultivating manners. Sometime before his sixteenth birthday, he meticulously copied the 110 "Rules of Civility and Decent Behaviour in Company and Conversation" from a English translation of the maxims originally written by a fifteenth-century French Jesuit.

The social position of the young George Washington was further enhanced by the marriage of his step-brother Lawrence to Ann Fairfax, whose cousin Thomas, Lord Fairfax, was the proprietor of five million acres in the Northern Neck of Virginia. While the marriage gave him access to the aristocracy, it was his willingness to survey the wilderness (beginning at age 16) that built his reputation as brave and adventurous. This experience coupled with his connections to the influential Fairfax family, brought the 21 year-old Washington to the attention of Governor Robert Dinwiddie who, in 1753, appointed him Adjutant for the Southern District of Virginia. A few months later Dinwiddie appointed Washington as a special envoy to deliver an ultimatum to the French in the Ohio Valley. When the summary of his expedition, *The Journal of Major George Washington*, was published in Williamsburg, Virginia and London in 1754, his reputation was assured on both sides of the Atlantic.

Another event advanced Washington's reputation was his near-miraculous survival of a battle with the French and their Indian allies near Fort Duquesne in July 1755. Washington had two horses shot from under him and four bullets piercing his uniform during the battle in which the British commander, General Edward Braddock, was mortally wounded. Washington helped command the troops in their withdrawal after the French victory. Although his military skills had been questionable, his providential survival and courage during the retreat were publicly lauded.

After three further years of frustrating efforts to protect the frontier with inadequate resources, he retired to his home and agricultural studies and attempted to make the western lands he had gained from military service more accessible. Fifteen years later, when the crisis over the Intolerable Acts dragged him back into the public arena, Washington's standing was still intact. The boy, whose father's death might have remanded him to anonymity as a gentleman farmer scraping a living out of too few acres, had fashioned himself into a public figure.

There is a curious symmetry to Washington's life. As a young man, he had remade himself to achieve personal goals; later in life, he remade himself to achieve political goals. Yet another remaking occurred after his death in 1799, this time at the hands of Parson Mason Locke Weems, Washington's first biographer. By the late 1790s, Washington had become identified with the Federalists, then locked in ideological battle with the Democratic-Republicans. However, his personal character remained unassailable. It was on this aspect of Washington's life that Weems focused his encomium to "Columbia's first and greatest son."

C. LESSON ACTIVITIES

1. Have the students consider what traits—personal, political, and professional—Washington would have needed to fill the unprecedented role that marked the beginning of the end of Europe's colonization of the New World. Keeping in mind the era in which Washington lived, students should make a list that includes timeless characteristics of leaders as well as skills need in eighteenth-century society. This can be done as a class activity or in small groups. Items on the list can be checked off as the lessons and readings confirm that Washington possessed those qualities.

2. Use the excerpts from the 'Rules of Civility' (Student Handout 2) to deduce for whom they were intended and what categories of behavior Washington felt needed polishing if one were to succeed in polite society. Again this can be done with the whole class, in small groups, or as individual homework assignments. [Note that

the entire list of 110 rules is available in George Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel (New York: Library of America).]

The students will easily find general categories such as cleanliness (#13, 51 . . .), modesty (#40, 54 . . .), self-control (#45, 105 . . .) and so on. With younger students you may want to give them categories and have them find appropriate examples. Have students list which rules are still taught and which are now dated (for example, #9, which applies if meat is being cooked in the fireplace and #13, which deals with removal of vermin), then compare their own lives to Washington's.

3. Have the students read the excerpts from Weems (Student Handout 3) and decide what his purposes were. Students will find that Weems focuses on the personal side of Washington, unsullied by the on-going political conflicts, and that he sees a divine plan in the events of Washington's life.

4. Students should then note the success Weems had in idealizing the personal Washington. The persistence of the cherry tree legend shows Weems's wide influence, and the image of Washington as a remote icon, while hardly what Weems had in mind, indicates that Washington's image was effectively separated from the partisan political associations surrounding him at his death. Also, Weems had produced an early best-seller; people of the time were apparently so hungry for the honored portrait of their first president that updated editions continued to be sold until twenty-five years after Washington's death, when Weems died.

D. Extended Lesson Ideas

1. Consider what Washington might have thought of Weems's biography. Keep in mind Washington's own efforts to ensure that he made a favorable impression.

2. Research the public perception of the character of George Washington over time. Examine formal representations of Washington in paintings and sculpture, popular art, and literature. How have writers and artists used Washington to arouse patriotic fervor? How has he been portrayed as a model of virtue?

"Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation"

At the age of fifteen, George Washington practiced his penmanship by copying the 110 maxims of decent conduct from Francis Hawkins's *Youth's Behaviour, or Decency in Conversation Among Men.* In his book, Hawkins included an English translation of the rules originally written by a French Jesuit in the fifteenth century. These rules that Washington meticulously copied became far more than a writing exercise; they formed a code of conduct to which the young man aspired.

1st Every Action done in Company, ought to be with Some Sign of Respect, to those that are Present.

2nd When in Company, put not your Hands to any Part of the Body, not usually Discovered.

3rd Shew Nothing to your Friend that may affright him.

4th In the Presence of Others Sing not to yourself with a humming Noise, nor Drum with your Fingers or Feet.

5th If You Cough, Sneeze, Sigh, or Yawn, do it not Loud but Privately; and Speak not in your Yawning, but put Your handkerchief or Hand before your face and turn aside.

6th Sleep not when others Speak, Sit not when others stand, Speak not when you Should hold your Peace, walk not on when others Stop.

7th Put not off your Cloths in the presence of Others, nor go out your Chamber half Drest.

* * *

9th Spit not in the Fire, nor Stoop low before it neither Put your Hands into the Flames to warm them, nor Set your Feet upon the Fire especially if there be meat before it.

10th When you Sit down, Keep your Feet firm and Even, without putting one on the other or Crossing them.

11th Shift not yourself in the Sight of others nor Gnaw your nails.

12th Shake not the head, Feet, or Legs rowl not the Eys lift not one eyebrow higher than the other wry not the mouth, and bedew no mans face with your Spittle, by approaching too near him when you Speak.

13th Kill no Vermin as Fleas, lice ticks &c in the Sight of Others, if you See any filth or thick Spittle put your foot Dexteriously upon it if it be upon the Cloths of your Companions, Put it off privately, and if it be upon your own Clothes return Thanks to him who puts it off.

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28th If any one come to Speak to you while you are Sitting Stand up tho he be your Inferiour, and when you Present Seats let it be to every one according to his Degree 29th When you meet with one of Greater Quality than yourself, Stop, and retire especially if it be at a Door or any Straight place to give way for him to Pass.

* * *

40th Strive not with your Superiers in argument, but always Submit your Judgment to others with Modesty.

* * *

45th Being to advise or reprehend any one, consider whether it ought to be in publick or in Private; presently, or at Some other time in what terms to do it & in reproving Shew no Sign of Cholar but do it with all Sweetness and Mildness.

* * *

49th Use no Reproachfull Language against any one neither Curse nor Revile.

50th Be not hasty to believe flying Reports to the Disparagment of any.

51st Wear not your Cloths, foul, unript or Dusty but See they be Brush'd once every day at least and take heed that you approach not to any uncleaness.

* * *

54th Play not the Peacock, looking every where about you, to See if you be well Deck't, if your Shoes fit well if your Stokings Sit neatly, and Cloths handsomely.

* * *

72nd Speak not in an unknown Tongue in Company but in your own Language and that as those of Quality do and not as ye Vulgar; Sublime matters treat Seriously.

* * *

76th While you are talking, Point not with your Finger at him of Whom you Discourse nor Approach too near him to whom you talk especially to his face.

77th Treat with men at fit Times about Business & Whisper not in the Company of Others.

* * *

79th Be not apt to relate News if you know not the truth thereof. In Discoursing of things you Have heard Name not your Author always A Secret Discover not.

* * *

91st Make no Shew of taking great Delight in your Victuals, Feed not with Greediness; cut your Bread with a knife, lean not on the Table neither find fault with what you Eat.

92nd Take no Salt or cut Bread with your Knife Greasy.

* * *

95th Put not your meat to your Mouth with your Knife in your hand neither Spit forth the Stones of any fruit Pye upon a Dish nor Cast anything under the table.

* * *

97th Put not another bit into your Mouth til the former be Swallowed let not your Morsels be too big for the Gowls.

* * *

105th Be not Angry at Table whatever happens & if you have reason to be so, Shew it not but on a Chearfull Countenance especially if there be Strangers for Good Humour makes one Dish of Meat a Feast.

* * *

107th If others talk at Table be attentive but talk not with Meat in your Mouth.

108th When you Speak of God or his Atributes, let it be Seriously & with Reverence. Honour & Obey your Natural Parents altho they be Poor.

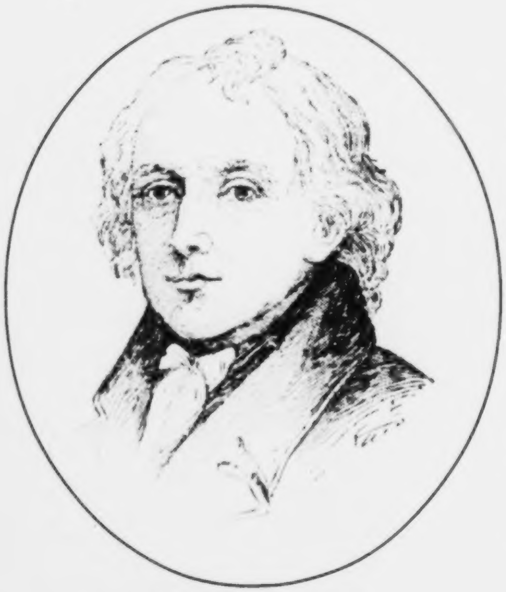
109th Let your Recreations be Manfull not Sinfull.

110th Labour to keep alive in your Breast that Little Spark of Celestial fire Called Conscience.

THE LIFE OF WASHINGTON

Mason Locke Weems

Mason Locke Weems was an Anglican minister who left the ministry to become a book peddler and writer. His biography of Washington, *The Life of George Washington: With Curious Anecdotes, Equally Honorable to Himself, and Exemplary to His Young Countrymen*, published in 1799, was extremely popular. The myth of the cherry tree first appeared in the fifth edition, published in 1806.



Mason Locke Weems
Dictionary of American Portraits
Dover Publications, 1967

. . . One day, in the garden, where he often amused himself hacking his mother's pea-sticks, he unluckily tried the edge of his hatchet on the body of a beautiful young English cherry-tree, which he barked so terribly, that I don't believe the tree ever got the better of it. The next morning the old gentleman finding out what had befallen his tree, which, by the by, was a great favourite, came into the house, and with much warmth asked for the mischievous author, declaring at the same time, that he would not have taken five guineas for his tree. Nobody could tell him any thing about it.

Presently George and his hatchet made their appearance. *George,* said his father, *do you know who killed that beautiful little cherry-tree yonder in the garden?* This was a *tough question*: and George staggered under it for a moment; but quickly recovered himself: and looking at his father, with the sweet face of youth brightened with the inexpressible charm of all conquering truth, he bravely cried out, *"I can't tell a lie, Pa; you know I can't tell a lie. I did cut it with my hatchet."—Run to my arms, you dearest boy,* cried his father in transports, *run to my arms; glad am I, George, that you killed my tree for you have paid me for it a thousand fold. Such an act of heroism in my son, is more worth than a thousand trees, though blossomed with silver, and their fruits of purest gold.*

* * *

George did not reach home until a few hours before his father's death, and then he was speechless! The moment he alighted, he ran into the chamber where he lay. But oh! what were his feelings when he saw the sad change that had passed upon him! when he beheld those eyes, late so *bright* and *fond,* now reft of all their lustre, faintly looking on him from their hollow sockets, and through swelling tears, in mute but melting language, bidding him a LAST, LAST FAREWELL! . . . Rushing with sobs and cries, he fell upon his father's neck . . . he kissed him a thousand and a thousand times, and bathed his clay-cold face with scalding tears. O happiest youth! Happiest in that love, which thus, to its enamoured soul strained an aged an[d] expiring sire. O worthiest to be the founder of a JUST and EQUAL GOVERNMENT, lasting as thy own deathless name! And O! happiest old man! thus luxuriously expiring in the arms of such a child!

* * *

About five years after the death of his father, he quitted school for ever, leaving the boys in tears for his departure: for he had ever lived among them, in the spirit of a brother. He was never guilty of so brutish a practice as that of fighting them himself, nor would he, when able to prevent it, allow them to fight one another. If he could not disarm their savage passions by his arguments, he would instantly go to the master, and inform him of their barbarous intentions.

* * *

The rank of midshipman was procured for him on board a British ship of war, then lying in our waters, and his trunk and clothes were actually sent on board. But when he came to take leave of his mother, she wept bitterly, and told him *she felt her heart would break if he left her.* George immediately got his trunk ashore! as he could not, for a moment, bear the idea of inflicting a wound on that dear life which had so long and so fondly sustained his own.

* * *

Braddock had fallen—his aides and officers, to a man, killed or wounded—and his troops, in *hopeless, helpless* despair, flying backwards and forwards from the fire of the Indians, like flocks of crowding sheep from the presence of their butchers. Washington, alone, remained unhurt! Horse after horse had been killed under him. Showers of bullets had lifted his locks or pierced his regimentals. But still protected by Heaven; still supported by a strength not his own, he had continued to fly from quarter to quarter, where his presence was most needed, sometimes animating his rangers; sometimes striving, but in vain, to rally the regulars.

* * *

When the children of the years to come, hearing his great name re-echoed from every lip, shall say to their fathers, *"what was it that raised Washington to such height of glory?"* let them be told that it was HIS GREAT TALENTS, CONSTANTLY GUIDED AND GUAR[D]ED BY RELIGION. For how shall man, frail man, prone to inglorious ease and pleasure, ever ascend the arduous steps of virtue, unless animated by the *mighty hopes* of religion? Or what shall stop him in his swift descent to infamy and vice, if unawed by that dread power which proclaims to the guilty that their secret crimes are seen, and shall not go unpunished? Hence the wise, in all ages, have pronounced, that *"there never was a truly great man without religion."*

LESSON TWO
MILITARY LEADER:
GEORGE WASHINGTON AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

A. LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To identify the pivotal events of the American Revolution.
- To examine evidence from letters and public papers that reveal Washington's character traits.
- To evaluate primary source documents to determine Washington's abilities as a military leader during the Revolutionary War.

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

British policy following the defeat of the French in North America during the Seven Years' War aroused the ire of American colonists. The Proclamation of 1763 forbidding settlement beyond the Appalachian Mountains, the adjustment of the custom s duty on sugar (1764), the Stamp Act (1765), and the Townshend Duties (1767) united the colonies in resistance. The Stamp Act Congress, coupled with pressure within the British Parliament, ultimately led to repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766. The Parliament, however, passed the Declaratory Act reasserting its right to pass legislation governing the colonies. Still in need of funds, Chancellor of the Exchequer Charles Townshend imposed duties on glass, paint, lead, paper, and tea. Americans responded with non-importation agreements. George Washington became one of the leaders in Virginia's opposition to the Townshend duties and served as the presiding officer of a Fairfax County committee that drafted a series of resolutions challenging British policy. Similar resolutions were passed throughout the colonies. Massachusetts, however, became the center of more violent protests and in 1768 British troops occupied Boston. Despite the repeal of the Townshend duties in 1770, resistance continued.

On March 5, 1770 a crowd of Bostonians taunted British regulars who, unable to disperse the crowd, opened fire killing five. Labeling the British action a massacre, Paul Revere circulated an engraving of the event entitled *The Bloody Massacre perpetrated in King Street.* The arrest and trial of Captain Thomas Preston did little to quell the hatred stirred up by the events of that evening. Hostility was directed at customs agents who collected the tax on tea. Throughout the colonies, and especially in Massachusetts, agents were seized and tarred and feathered by mobs of patriots.

Disguised as Mohawks, a band of patriots boarded British merchant ships on December 16, 1773, and destroyed fifty tons of tea by dumping it into Boston harbor. Parliament retaliated by passing the Intolerable Acts. News of the passage of a series of acts to coerce one colony prompted other colonies to demonstrate their support for the people of Massachusetts. In colonial Virginia, Washington proclaimed "the cause of Boston [is] the cause of America." He further argued that appeals to the King or Parliament were futile. King George III told his prime minister, "The dye is now cast, the colonies must either submit or triumph."

In September 1774 delegates from 12 colonies met in Philadelphia to develop a unified response to the Intolerable Acts. Washington served as a delegate of the Congress from Virginia. This First Continental Congress advised each of the colonies to form its own militia and urged strict enforcement of boycotts of British goods. The delegates disbanded near the end of October having agreed to meet again if their grievances were not resolved.

The Second Continental Congress convened on May 10, 1775, less than a month after blood was shed at Lexington and Concord. The Congress organized a continental army and on June 15 appointed George Washington as Commander-in-Chief. Two days later British forces, suffering heavy casualties, dislodged the Patriots from Breed's Hill overlooking Boston (incorrectly referred to as the Battle of Bunker Hill).

What had begun as loyal resistance to Parliamentary acts had now become a revolution. On July 4, 1776 the Second Continental Congress, having voted for independence on July 2, approved the declaration by a vote of 12–0 with New York abstaining. On July 9, New York agreed to endorse the Declaration of Independence. Fifty-five delegates signed the document on August 2, 1776. Independence, now openly declared, had to be won on the field of battle.

Despite Congress's failure to support adequately the American forces with needed supplies and money, desertions, petty bickering among the states, and numerous defeats on the battlefield, Washington was able to persevere. With financial aid from Europe and active participation of foreign troops the tides of war turned. With a French blockade preventing the British from supplying or evacuating Lord Cornwall's troops encamped at Yorktown, the war, for all intents and purposes, came to an end in 1781.

After accepting the surrender at Yorktown, Washington established a camp at Newburgh, New York, awaiting the conclusion of peace negotiations. Although major encounters ended after Cornwallis's surrender, British regulars still occupied territory in the United States, including the port of New York. Allied and British diplomats began formal peace negotiations in Paris in September, 1782 and a preliminary treaty between the United States and Britain, signed in November 1782, was not to go into effect until Britain and France agreed to a settlement. In late January, 1783, the British signed peace treaties with France and Spain, and on February 4,1783 the war officially ended.

The war had been long and costly and the Continental Congress had considerable difficulty in collecting taxes assessed to states to pay the costs of the war. The military had not been paid in some time and the officer corps sent a delegation to Congress to express their grievances in January 1783. They expressed their discontent over a number of issues including their lack of pay, lack of food and clothing allowances, and Congress's failure to make provisions for an agreed upon pension. Failing to get satisfaction from Congress, Major John

Armstrong wrote an anonymous address to the army encamped at Newburgh. He urged officers to act with boldness and "suspect the man who would advise to more moderation and longer forbearance." Major Armstrong had the backing of some prominent civilian leaders including Gouverneur Morris. Some creditors believed that the only way to secure payment of debts and provide for the economic stability of the new nation was to enable the central government to force states to pay their allotted share of the national debt.

Major Armstrong, backed by General Gates, called for a meeting of officers at Newburgh on March 11. Washington issued an order forbidding unauthorized meetings and proposed instead a general meeting of the officer corps for March 15. Washington did not indicate that he intended to be present at the meeting, and the officers were surprised when he appeared and addressed the gathering. Washington's powerful speech quelled a potential uprising, saving the young republic from what could have easily fallen under the control of a military despot.

Once the treaty negotiated in Paris was signed, Washington submitted his resignation to the Congress and retired to private life at his beloved Mount Vernon, expecting to spend the remainder of his days as a Virginia planter.

C. LESSON ACTIVITIES

After reading textbook accounts of the American Revolution and discussing the tide of war, inform the class that they will be reading several of George Washington's personal accounts of events during the Revolutionary War to help them examine Washington's character traits and his military leadership.

1. Time Line. Have students construct a large time line listing the major battles during the Revolution beginning with Lexington and Concord and ending with Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown (1775–1781). A time line is provided as Student Handout 4. In lieu of using this time line, you may wish to have students develop their own or download the time line provided on the *Liberty! The Story of the American Revolution* Web site (http//www.pbs.org/ktca/liberty/chronicle/timeline.html). Display the time line along one wall of the classroom.

2. Read. Divide the class into four groups and assign each group a packet of primary source readings (Student Handouts 5–8). Each group should:

    - Carefully examine their assigned documents and review text accounts of the Revolutionary War to help them place their selected readings in the context of the war.

    - Discuss: What do the readings reveal about Washington's character? His military leadership? (Questions to guide discussions are at the end of each group's readings.)

- Select an illustration that reflects some aspect of their assigned readings. (If students wish, have them sketch their own image or draw a cartoon that relates to the documents they have analyzed.) Place the illustration on the class time line.

- Provide a summary of the readings for the class.

3. Role Playing—Washington's Newburgh Address of March 15, 1783
Remind students that despite the surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1781, peace was not agreed upon until 1783. New York was still in British hands and Washington had established his headquarters at Newburgh on the Hudson River a few miles north of West Point. Here he awaited word of the progress of peace negotiations.

Read excerpts from Washington's letter to Joseph Jones (Student Handout 9) to the class. Explain to the class the developing crisis with the army.

Re-enactment

Roles:

- General Washington (1 student)

Gives the *Newburgh Address* to a gathering of officers at Newburgh, March 15, 1783. For the purposes of the activity, the members of the Continental Congress and the press corps should listen to the address as well.
Give the student who is playing the role of General Washington a copy of the Newburgh Address (Student Handout 10). Have the student either:

a) read key sections of the speech, or
b) rewrite the speech using contemporary language and deliver it in a dramatic presentation to the officer corps.

- Officers in the Continental Army (3 to 5 students)

Discuss the speech among themselves and what action they should take. Again, the members of the Continental Congress and of the press corps should listen in to hear their points of view. Explain to the students playing officers that they are disgruntled because of the lack of pay and rumors that Congress planned to renege on its promise of give land to officers who had served in the Revolution. Remind them that, while disgruntled, the officer corps held General Washington in high regard.

- Members of the press corps (2 to 3 students)

Write newspaper articles or editorials on the meeting of officers at Newburgh for their respective gazettes to post in the classroom. You may wish to have one student draw a political cartoon to accompany a news story or editorial on the Newburgh Address.

- Members of the Continental Congress (Remaining students)

Prepare short speeches to Congress explaining the situation at Newburgh and the office corps' response to General Washington's speech. Have students present their speeches to the class.

Debrief the activity. (Class discussion)

Analyze Washington's address. What were the most powerful arguments that he presented to defuse a possible "military coup"? How did his speech play upon the emotions of the officers? Ask students to express their personal feeling about the situation if they were officers at Newburgh. Would the outcome of the meeting have been the same? Why or why not?

4. Read. In class, have students read Washington's speech announcing the resignation of his military commission on December 23, 1783 (Student Handout 11). Discuss as a class the tone of the speech and how it might have been received in Congress.

5. Evaluation. Conclude the lesson by having students write an essay appraising Washington's military leadership during the eight years of the American Revolution.

V. EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

1. During a break in the meetings of the Federal Convention in Philadelphia in July 1787, George Washington and Gouverneur Morris decided to go trout fishing in the vicinity. While on the excursion, Washington left his colleague at the stream and rode to Valley Forge where he had established winter quarters during the winter of 1777–78. He recorded the following entry in his diary:

> Tuesday 31st. Whilst Mr. Morris was fishing I rid over the old Contonment [containment] of the American [army] of the Winter 1777, & 8. Visited all the Works, wch. were in Ruins; and the Incampments [encampments] in woods where the ground had not been cultivated.

Have students, assuming the persona of George Washington, complete the diary entry with what Washington may have recorded if he had written a more detailed entry. It would be appropriate to believe that Washington not only reflected on the winter at Valley Forge but also on the events of the war before and after Valley Forge. Looking back, after the war, how would Washington have appraised the hardships that his forces encountered during the winter of 1777–78? Would he have considered the terrible sacrifices of eight years of war worthwhile considering the developments since the end of the war?

2. Construct a map of North America and locate the major campaigns during the Revolutionary War. Include the names of the major military leaders in each of the campaigns.

3. Have students write an evaluative essay on the importance of foreign assistance in the form of military leaders, naval support, and financial aid in the American Revolution.

4. Examine the *Liberty! The Story of the American Revolution* Web site (http://www.pbs.org/ktca/liberty/chronicle/index.html) for information on pivotal events during the Revolutionary War.

5. George Washington resigned his commission after the war and returned to the life of a farmer at Mount Vernon. People on both sides of the Atlantic recognized that as Commander of the Continental Army, Washington had within his power the ability to set himself up as a military despot. He could have assumed leadership of the nation had he supported the rebellious officers at Newburgh in March, 1783. Have students research the story of the Roman General Cincinnatus (5th century B.C.E.). Ask students why Washington earned the title "The American Cincinnatus?" How did political leaders of the eighteenth century view Washington's decision? Is it typical for a popular military commander to give up his position of power? What does this decision tell about Washington's character?

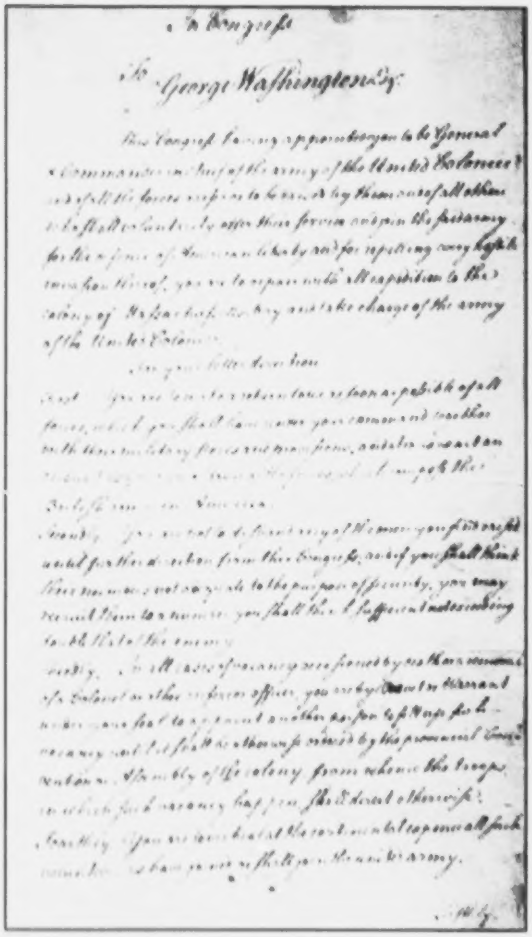
AMERICAN REVOLUTION PIVOTAL EVENTS TIME LINE, 1774–1781

1774	
September	First Continental Congress meets in Philadelphia
1775	
April	Battles of Lexington and Concord
	British held Boston under siege
May	Second Continental Congress meets in Philadelphia
June	Washington appointed Commander-in-Chief
	Battle of Bunker Hill (Breed's Hill)
Aug.–Dec.	U.S. military expedition in Canada
1776	
January	Thomas Paine publishes pamphlet *Common Sense*
July	Congress approves Declaration of Independence
August	British abandon Boston
	British victory at Battle of Long Island
September	British occupy New York City
December	American victory at Trenton, New Jersey
1777	
January	American victory at Princeton, New Jersey
July	British take Fort Ticonderoga, New York
September	British victory at Brandywine, occupy Philadelphia
October	American victory at Battle of Saratoga, New York
	British victory at Germantown, Pennsylvania
November	Congress formally adopts Articles of Confederation
December	Washington establishes winter quarters at Valley Forge
1778	
February	France signs treaty of alliance with the United States
July	Indecisive battle at Monmouth, New Jersey
December	British capture Savannah, Georgia
1779	
June	Spain enters the war against Britain
September	*Bonhomme Richard* v. *Serapis* off the English coast
1780	
May	British occupy Charleston, South Carolina
September	Benedict Arnold turns over West Point to British
1781	
January	American victory at Cowpens, South Carolina
February	Maryland ratifies Articles of Confederation
August	French fleet blockades British at Yorktown, Virginia
October	Lord Cornwallis surrenders to at Yorktown

PRIMARY SOURCE READINGS
Group One

Washington attended the Second Continental Congress as a delegate from Virginia wearing his military uniform from his service during the French and Indian War. On June 10, John Adams proposed that the Congress recognize the New England forces fighting against the British as a Continental Army and appoint a commander and strongly hinted that the command should go to George Washington of Virginia. On June 14 Congress resolved to raise an army of six companies of riflemen and on the following day, in a unanimous vote, elected Washington Commander in Chief of the Continental Army.

Instructions from the Continental Congress



This Congress having appointed you to be General & Commander in chief of the army of the United Colonies and of all the forces raised or to be raised by them and of all others who shall voluntarily offer their service and join the said army for the defence of American liberty and for repelling every hostile invasion thereof, you are to repair with all expedition to the colony of Massachusetts-bay and take charge of the army of the United Colonies. . . .

. . . You are . . . to use your best circumspection and (advising with your council of war) to order and dispose of the said army under your command, as may be most advantageous for the obtaining the end, for which these forces have been raised, making it your special care, in discharge of the great trust committed unto you that the liberties of American receive no detriment.

By Order of Congress
John Hancock President

Source: *The Great Experiment: George Washington and the American Revolution,* The Huntington Library exhibition.

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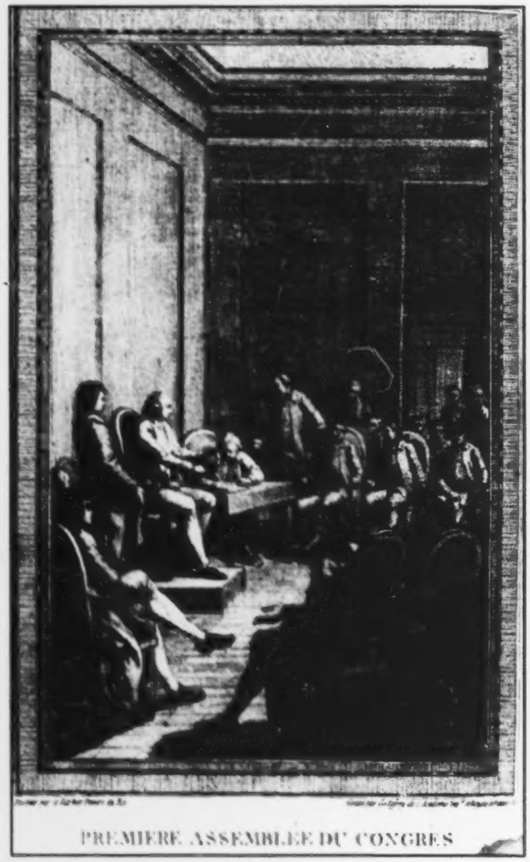

Imaginary depiction of Congress
Premier Assemblèe du Congress, François Godefroy

Address to the Continental Congress

Mr. President, Tho' I am truly sensible of the high Honour done me in this Appointment, yet I feel great distress, from a consciousness that my abilities & Military experience may not be equal to the extensive & important Trust: However, as the Congress desire it I will enter upon the momentous duty, & exert every power I Possess In their service & for the Support of the glorious Cause: I beg they will accept my most cordial thanks for this distinguished testimony of their Approbation.

But lest some unlucky event should happen unfavourable to my reputation, I beg it may be remembered by every Gentn in the room, that I this day declare with the utmost sincerity, I do not think my self equal to the Command I am honoured with.

As to pay, Sir, I beg leave to Assure the Congress that as no pecuniary consideration could have tempted me to have accepted this Arduous emploiment at the expence of my domestk ease & happiness I do not wish to make any proffit from it: I will keep an exact Account of my expences; those I doubt not they will discharge & that is all I desire.

George Washington
June 16, 1775

Source: George Washington, *Writings,* selected by John H. Rhodehamel (New York: Library of America), p. 167.

Letter to Martha Washington

Philadelphia June 18th 1775

My Dearest,

I am now set down to write to you on a subject which fills me with inexpressable concern—and this concern is greatly aggravated and Increased when I reflect on the uneasiness I know it will give you—It has been determined in Congress, that the whole Army raised for the defence of the American Cause shall be put under my care, and that it is

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necessary for me to proceed immediately to Boston to take upon me the Command of it. You may believe me my dear Patcy, when I assure you, in the most solemn manner, that, so far from seeking this appointment I have used every endeavour in my power to avoid it, not only from my unwillingness to part with you and the Family, but from a consciousness of its being a trust too great for my Capacity and that I should enjoy more real happiness and felicity in one month with you, at home, that I have the most distant prospect of reaping abroad, if my stay was to be Seven times Seven years. . . .

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 167–68.

Letter to Augustine Washington

Philadelphia June 20th 1775

Dear Brother,

I am now to bid adieu to you, & to every kind of domestick ease, for a while. I am Imbarked on a wide Ocean, boundless in its prospect & from whence, perhaps, no safe harbour is to be found. I have been called upon by the unanimous Voice of the Colonies to take the Command of the Continental Army—an honour I neither sought after, nor desired, as I am thoroughly convinced; that it requires greater Abilities, and much more experience, than I am Master of . . . . That I may discharge the Trust to the Satisfaction of my Imployers, is my first wish—that I shall aim to do it, there remains as little doubt of—how far I may succeed is another point—but this I am sure of, that in the worse event, I shall have the consolation of knowing (if I act to the best of my judgment) that the blame ought to lodge upon the appointers, not the appointed, as it was by no means a thing of my own seeking, or proceeding from any hint of my friends. . . .

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 171–72.

Questions for Group One to consider:

- Why was Washington appointed Commander of the Continental Army?
- If he felt that he was not qualified, why did he accept the appointment?
- Why would Washington agree to serve without pay?
- How did Washington react to the appointment in his letter to his wife and brother?
- What can you perceive about Washington's character in these letters?

PRIMARY SOURCE READINGS
Group Two

Throughout the war Washington was conscious of pressures on both his officer corps and enlisted men. As Commander in Chief of the Continental Army he faced a myriad of problems. He repeatedly wrote of his concerns for maintaining discipline among the ranks, declining enlistment, and the importance of supplying the army. He was likewise troubled by reports that the British were mistreating captives and recognized the importance of insuring humane treatment of prisoners.

General Orders

Head Quarters, Cambridge, July 4th 1775.

. . . [T]he Continental Congress having now taken all the Troops of the several Colonies, which have been raised, or which may be hereafter raised, for the support and defence of the Liberties of America; into their Pay and Service: They are now the Troops of the United Provinces of North America; and it is hoped that all Distinctions of Colonies will be laid aside; so that one and the same spirit may animate the whole, and the only Contest be, who shall render, or this great and common cause in which we are all engaged.

It is required and expected that exact discipline be observed, and due Subordination prevail thro' the whole Army, as a Failure in these most essential points must necessarily produce extreme Hazard, Disorder and Confusion; and end in shameful disappointment and disgrace.

The General most earnestly requires, and expects, a due observance of those articles of war, established for the Government of the army, which forbid profane cursing, swearing & drunkeness; And in like manner requires & expects, of all Officers, and Soldiers, not engaged on actual duty, a punctual attendance on divine service, to implore the blessings of heaven upon the means used for our safety and defence.

All Officers are required and expected to pay diligent Attention, to keep their Men neat and clean—to visit them often at their quarters, and inculcate upon them the necessity of cleanliness, as essential to their health and service. They are particularly to see, that they have Straw to lay on, if to be had, and to make it known if they are destitute of this article. . . . Proper Notice will be taken of such Officers and men, as distinguish themselves by their attention to these necessary duties. . . .

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 175–76.

Letter to Richard Henry Lee

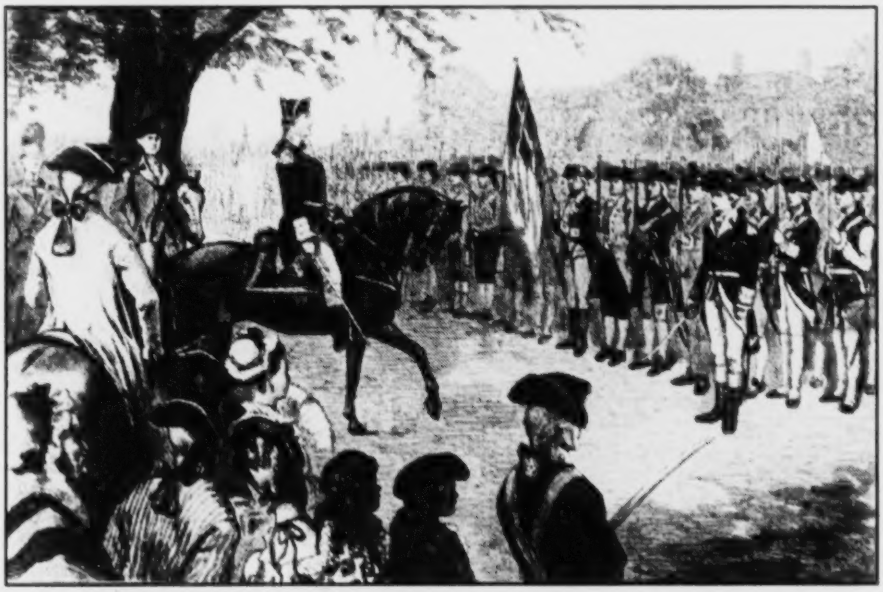
Camp at Cambridge July 10th 1775.

Dear Sir,

. . . I arrivd here on this day week; since which I have been labouring . . . to obtain returns of our strength . . . and never have been able to accomplish the matter till this day . . . .

You will perceive by the returns, that, we have but about 16,000. effective men in all this department, whereas by the accts which I receivd from even the first Officers in Command, I had no doubt of finding between 18. and 20,000—out of these there are only 14000 fit for duty—So soon as I was able to get this state of the army, & came to the knowledge of our Weakness, I immediately summoned a Council of War . . . . Between you and me I think we are in an exceeding dangerous Situation, as our Numbers are not much larger than we suppose, from the best accts we are able to get, those of the Enemy to be; theirs situated in such a manner as to be drawn to any point of attack without our having an hours previous notice of it. . . . The Enemy have strongly fortified, or will in a few days, their Camp on Bunkers Hill; after which, & their new Landed Troops have got a little refreshd, we shall look for a visit, if they mean, as we are told they do, to come out of their Lines—their great Command of Artillery, & adequate Stores of powder & ca gives them advantages which we have only to lament the want of—The abuses in this army, I fear, are considerable, and the new modelling of it, in the Face of an Enemy, from whom we every hour expect an attack exceedingly difficult, & dangerous. . . .

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 177–78.



Washington taking command of the army at Cambridge, Massachusetts.
C.S. Reinhart, *Harper's Weekly*, reprinted in *The American Revolution: A Picture Sourcebook* (New York: Dover Publications, 1975), p. 36.

Washington's Letter to Thomas Gage

Cambridge August 11th 1775

Sir

I understand that the Officers engaged in the Cause of Liberty, and their Country, who by the Fortune of War, have fallen into your Hands have been thrown indiscriminately, into a common Gaol appropriated for Felons—That no Consideration has been had for those of the most respectable Rank, when languishing with Wounds and Sickness. . . .

My Duty now makes it necessary to apprize you, that for the future I shall regulate my Conduct towards those Gentlemen who are or may be in our Possession, exactly by the Rule which you shall observe, towards those of ours, who may be in your Custody. If Severity, & Hardship mark the Line of your Conduct, (painful as it may be to me) your Prisoners will feel its Effects; But if Kindness & Humanity are shewn to ours, I shall with Pleasure consider those in our Hands, only as unfortunate, and they shall receive the Treatment to which the unfortunate are ever intitled.

I beg to be favoured with an Answer as soon as possible. And am, Sir, Your most Obedt & very Hbble Servt

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 182–83.

Questions for Group Two to consider:

- What inferences can be drawn for Washington's General Orders of July 4, 1775?
- What does Washington expect of his officers?
- According to Washington, how dangerous is the situation around Boston?
- What information can you gather about Washington's character from his letter to General Gates regarding treatment of American prisoners of war?

PRIMARY SOURCE READINGS
Group Three

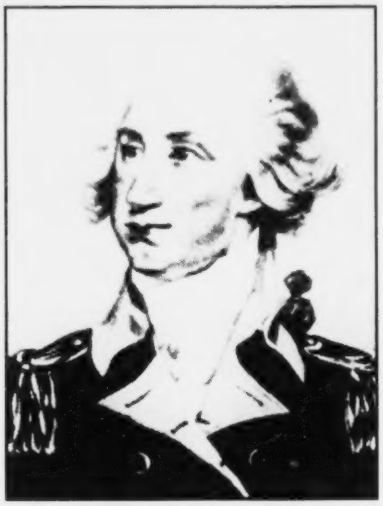
On learning that the British commander in Canada was preparing an invasion of New York, Washington sent General Philip Schuyler into Canada in late August, 1775. The Canadian expedition soon passed to the command of General Richard Montgomery, who occupied Montreal. In September, Washington sent Colonel Benedict Arnold to Quebec. Montgomery and Arnold joined forces and assaulted the British at Quebec. The campaign ended in disaster; Montgomery was killed and Arnold wounded. After the French joined in the war, Washington faced a dilemma. France might successfully dislodge the British in Canada but could establish a permanent hold on the territory that would threaten the security of the United States.

Washington to the Inhabitants of Canada

Friends and Brethren,

The unnatural Contest between the English Colonies and Great Britain, has now risen to such a Heighth, that Arms alone must decide it. . . . The Hand of Tyranny has been arrested in its Ravages, and the British Arms which have shone with so much Splendor in every Part of the Globe, are now tarnished with Disgrace and Disappointment.—Generals of approved Experience, who boasted of subduing this great Continent, find themselves circumscribed within the Limits of a single City and its Suburbs, suffering all the Shame and Distress of a Siege. While the trueborn Sons of America, animated by the genuine Principles of Liberty and Love of their Country, with increasing Union, Firmness and Discipline repel every Attack, and despise every Danger.

Above all, we rejoice, that our Enemies have been deceived with Regard to you—They have perswaded themselves, they have even dared to say, that the Canadians were not capable of distinguishing between the Blessings of Liberty, and the Wretchedness of Slavery . . . . [T]hey see with a Chagrin equal to our Joy, that you are enlightened, generous, and virtuous—that you will not renounce your own Rights, or serve as Instruments to deprive your Fellow Subjects of theirs.—Come then, my Brethren, unite with us in an indisoluble Union, let us run together to the same Goal.—We have taken up Arms in Defence of our Liberty, our Property, our Wives, and our Children, we are determined to preserve them, or die. We look forward with Pleasure to that Day not far remote (we hope) when the Inhabitants of America shall have one Sentiment, and the full Enjoyment of the Blessings of a free Government.



Philip John Schuyler
Painting by John Trumbull
Dictionary of American Portraits
Dover Publications, 1967

Incited by these Motives, and encouraged by the Advice of many Friends of Liberty among you, the Grand American Congress have sent an Army into your Province, under the Command of General Schuyler; not to plunder, but to protect you; to animate, and bring forth into Action those Sentiments of Freedom you have disclosed, and which the Tools of Despotism would extinguish through the whole Creation.—To co-operate with the Design, and to frustrate those cruel and perfidious Schemes, which would deluge our Frontiers with the Blood of Women and Children; I have detached Colonel Arnold into your Country, with a Part of the Army under my Command—I have enjoined upon him, and I am certain that he will consider himself, and act as in the Country of his Patrons, and best Friends. Necessaries and Accommodations of every Kind which you may furnish, he will thankfully receive, and render the full Value.—I invite you therefore as Friends and Brethren, to provide him with such Supplies as your Country affords, and I pledge myself not only for your Safety and Security, but for ample Compensation. Let no Man desert his Habitation—Let no one flee as before an Enemy. The Cause of America, and of Liberty, is the Cause of every virtuous American Citizen; whatever may be his Religion or his Descent, the United Colonies know no Distinction but such as Slavery, Corruption and arbitrary Domination may create. Come then, ye generous Citizens, range yourselves under the Standard of general Liberty—against which all the Force and Artifice of Tyranny will never be able to prevail.

—September 14, 1775

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 187–88.

Letter to Henry Laurens

Fredericksburgh, November 14, 1778.

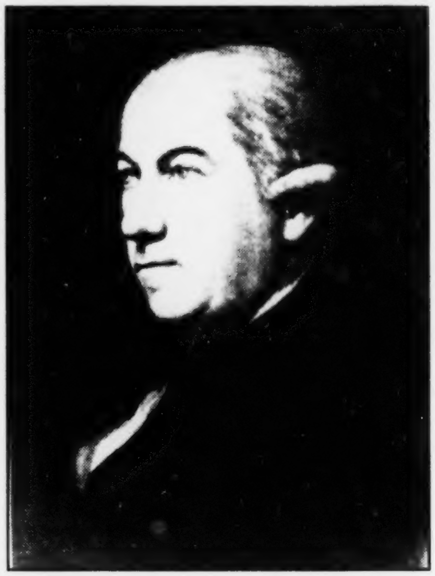
Dear Sir:

. . . The question of the Canadian expedition . . . appears to me one of the most interesting that has hitherto agitated our National deliberations. I have one objection to it, untouched in my public letter, which is in my estimation, insurmountable, and alarms all my feelings for the true and permanent interest of my country. This is the introduction of a large body of French troops into Canada, and putting them in possession of the capital of that Province, attached to them by all the ties of blood, habits, manners, religion and former connexion of government. I fear this would be too great a temptation, to be resisted by any power actuated by the common maxims of national policy. . . .

France acknowledged for some time past the most powerful monarchy in Europe by land, able now to dispute the empire of the sea with Great Britain, and if joined with Spain, I may say certainly superior, possessed of New Orleans, on our Right, Canada on our left and seconded by the numerous tribes of Indians on our Rear from one extremity to the other, a people, so generally friendly to her and whom she knows so well how to conciliate; would, it is much to be apprehended have it in her power to give law to these states. . . .

I am heartily disposed to entertain the most favourable sentiments of our new ally and to cherish them in others to a reasonable degree; but it is a maxim founded on the universal experience of mankind, that no nation is to be trusted farther than it is bound by its interest; and no prudent statesman or politician will venture to depart from it. In our circumstances we ought to be particularly cautious; for we have not yet attained sufficient vigor and maturity to recover from the shock of any false step into which we may unwarily fall.

. . . But upon the whole, Sir, to wave every other consideration; I do not like to add to the number of our national obligations. I would wish as much as possible to avoid giving a foreign power new claims of merit for services performed, to the United States, and would ask no assistance that is not indispensible, I am, etc.



Henry Laurens
Painting by Charles Willson Peale
Dictionary of American Portraits
Dover Publications, 1967

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 328–30.

Questions for Group Three to consider:

- What are the arguments Washington uses to persuade Canadians to join in the war against Britain?
- What does he ask of Canadians as he dispatches two armies into Canada?
- Why is Washington fearful of a French expedition into Canada in 1778?
- How logical are Washington's arguments?
- Does it appear that Washington would prefer to have Canada remain a British possession than have it come under the control of France, an ally of the United States?

PRIMARY SOURCE READINGS
Group Four

Although military action virtually ceased after Lord Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown in October 1781, a state of war continued during the peace negotiations. Washington expressed some doubts about Britain's goodwill in negotiating a peace and continued to express his concern regarding the failure of the states to provide for the army and warned of dire consequences if the situation was not remedied.

Circular to New England State Governments

Head Quarters, New Windsor, January 5, 1781.

Sir:

It is with extreme anxiety, and pain of mind, I find myself constrained to inform Your Excellency that the event I have long apprehended would be the consequence of the complicated distresses of the Army, has at length taken place. On the night of the 1st instant a mutiny was excited by the Non Commissioned Officers and Privates of the Pennsylvania Line, which soon became so universal as to defy all opposition; in attempting to quell this tumult, in the first instance, some Officers were killed, others wounded, and the lives of several common Soldiers lost. Deaf to the arguments, entreaties, and utmost efforts of all their Officers to stop them, the Men moved off from Morris Town . . . and from Accounts just received . . . they were still in a body, on their March to Philadelphia, to demand a redress of their grievances. At what point this defection will stop, or how extensive it may prove God only knows; at present the Troops at the important Posts in this vicinity remain quiet, not being acquainted with this unhappy and alarming affair; but how long they will continue so cannot be ascertained, as they labor under some of the pressing hardships, with the Troops who have revolted.

The aggravated calamities and distresses that have resulted, from the total want of pay for nearly twelve Months, for want of cloathing, at a severe season, and not unfrequently the want of provisions; are beyond description. The circumstances will now point out much more forcibly what ought to be done, than any thing that can possibly be said by me, on the subject.

. . . [I]t is in vain to think an Army can be kept together much longer, under such a variety of sufferings as ours has experienced: and that unless some immediate and spirited measures are adopted to furnish at least three Months pay to the Troops, in Money that will be of some value to them; And at the same time ways and means are devised to cloath and feed them better (more regularly I mean) than they have been, the worst that can befall us may be expected. . . .

Source: George Washington Papers, Library of Congress

Letter to James McHenry

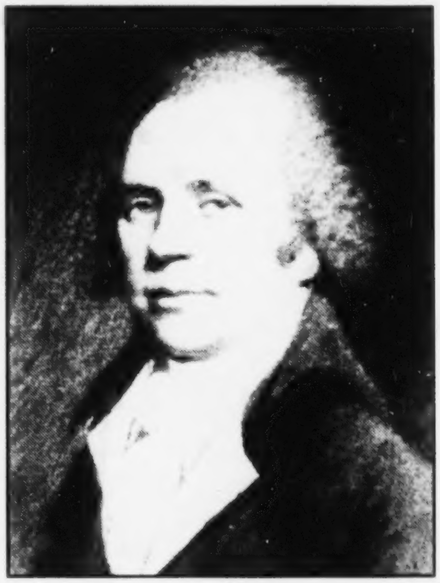
Verplanks point, October 17, 1782

My dear Sir:

. . . In a time like this, of general uncertainty with respect to the designs of the British Court. . . If they can obtain any advantages at Sea or in the Indies, East or West no matter where, I am of opinion they will continue the War; if their affairs on the other hand stand still or continue to retrograte, their stomachs will come to, and they will think seriously of Peace.

. . . [T]he impolicy . . . of suffering ourselves to be lulled by expectations of Peace, because we wish it, and because it is the Interest of great Britain to hold up the idea of it will, more than probably, prove the ruin of our cause; and the disbanding of the Army; for it really appears, from the conduct of the States, that they do not conceive it necessary for the Army to receive any thing but hard knocks . . . .

Let any Man, who will allow reason fairplay, ask himself what must be the inevitable consequences of such policy. Have not Military Men the same feelings of those in Civil line? why then shd. the one set receive the constant wages of Service, and the other be continually without them? do the former deserve less for their watchings and toils, for enduring heat and cold, for standing in Sunshine and in Rain, and for the dangers they are continually exposed to for the sake of the Country, and by which means the Man in civil life sits quiet under his own vine and his figtree solacing himself in all the comforts, pleasures and enjoyments, of life, free and unrestrained? let impartiality answer the question. These are matters of serious consideration, the patience, the fortitude, the long and great sufferings of this Army is unexampled in History; but there is an end to all things, and I fear we are very near one to this, which, more than probably, will oblige me to stick very close to the Troops this Winter and to try like a careful physician to prevent if possible the disorders getting to an incurable height. I am etc.



James McHenry
Painting attributed to James Sharples, Sr.
Dictionary of American Portraits
Dover Publications, 1967

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 474–76.

Letter to Tench Tilghman

Newburgh, January 10, 1783

My dear Sir:

. . . The obstinacy of the King, and his unwillingness to acknowledge the Independency of this Country, I have ever looked upon as the greatest obstacles in the way of a Peace. . . . Peace is not yet made nor will it, I conceive if the influence of the Crown can draw forth fresh Supplies from the nation for the purpose of carrying on the War. . . .

The King of G B by his Letters Patent (wch. I have seen) has Authorised Mr. Oswald to treat with any Comr. or Commissioners from the *United States* of America, who shall appear with proper Powers; this certainly, is a capital point gained. It is at least breaking ground on *their* part; and I dare say proved a bitter pill to Royalty. . . .

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 480–81.

Questions for Group Four to consider:

- What prompted the mutiny of troops in 1781? How does Washington respond to the mutiny of the Pennsylvania Line?
- What is the tone of Washington's correspondence to James McHenry?
- What arguments does Washington use to try to convince Congress that it must address the needs of the army?
- Why was Washington reluctant to believe that the British were negotiating in good faith?

,WASHINGTON'S LETTER TO JOSEPH JONES

Newburgh, March 12, 1783.

Dear Sir:

. . . My Official Letter to Congress of this date will inform you of what has happened in this Quarter . . . that the temper of the Army, tho. very irritable on acct. of their long-protracted sufferings has been apparently extremely quiet while their business was depending before Congress untill four days past. In the mean time, it should seem reports have been propagated in Philadelphia that dangerous combinations were forming in the army; and this at a time when there was not a syllable of the kind in agitation in Camp.

It also appears that upon the arrival of a certain Gentleman from Phila. in Camp, whose name, I do not, at present, incline to mention such sentiments as these were immediately and industriously circulated. that it was universally expected the Army would not disband untill they had obtained Justice. That the public creditors looked up to them for redress of their Grievances, would afford them every aid, and even join them in the Field, if necessary. That some members of Congress wished the Measure might take effect, in order to compel the Public, particularly the delinquent States, to do justice. With many other suggestions of a Similar Nature; from whence, and a variety of other considerations it is generally believ'd the Scheme was not only planned, but also digested and matured in Philadelphia; . . . for as soon as the Minds of the Army were thought to be prepared for the transaction, anonymous invitations were circulated, requesting a general Meeting of the Officers. . . .

So soon as I obtained knowledge of these things, I issued the order of the 11th. (transmitted to Congress;) in order to rescue the foot, that stood wavering on the precipice of despair, from taking those steps which would have lead to the abyss of misery while the passions were inflamed, and the mind trimblingly alive with the recollection of past sufferings, and their present feelings. I did this upon the principle that it is easier to divert from a wrong to a right path, than it is to recall the hasty and fatal steps which have been already taken.

. . . It is to be hoped they will be induced to adopt more rational measures, and wait a while longer for the settlemts. of their Accts.; the postponing of which gives more uneasiness in the Army than any other thing, there is not a man in it, who will not acknowledge that Congress have not the means of payment. . . .

. . . Let me entreat you . . . my good Sir to put this matter to an issue, and if there are Delegates among you, who are really opposed to doing justice to the Army, scruple not to tell them, if matters should come to extremity, that they must be answerable for all the ineffable horrors which may be occasioned thereby. I am etc.

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 493–95.

WASHINGTON'S SPEECH TO THE OFFICERS OF THE ARMY

Head Quarters, Newburgh, March 15, 1783

Gentlemen: By an anonymous summons, an attempt has been made to convene you together; how inconsistent with the rules of propriety! how unmilitary! and how subversive of all order and discipline, let the good sense of the Army decide.

In the moment of this Summons, another anonymous production was sent into circulation, addressed more to the feelings and passions, than to the reason and judgment of the Army. . . . [T]he Author of the Address, should have had more charity, than to mark for Suspicion, the Man who should recommend moderation and longer forebearance, or, in other words, who should not think as he thinks, and act as he advises. But he had another plan in view, in which candor and liberality of Sentiment, regard to justice, and love of Country, have no part . . . .

Gentlemen, I have thought it incumbent on me . . . to shew upon what principles I opposed the irregular and hasty meeting . . . and not because I wanted to . . . [prevent you] to make known your grievances. If my conduct heretofore, has not evinced to you, that I have been a faithful friend to the Army, my declaration of it at this time wd. be equally unavailing and improper. But as I was among the first who embarked in the cause of our common Country. As I have never left your side one moment, but when called from you on public duty. As I have been the constant companion and witness of your Distresses, and not among the last to feel, and acknowledge your merits. As I have ever considered my own Military reputation as inseperable connected with that of the Army. As my Heart has ever expanded with joy, when I have heard its praises, and my indignation has arisen, when the mouth of detraction has been opened against it, it can *scarcely be supposed,* at this late stage of the war, that I am indifferent to its interests. But, how are they to be promoted? The way is plain, says the anonymous Addresser. If War continues, removed into the unsettled Country; there establish yourselves, and leave an ungrateful country to defend itself. But who are they to defend? Our Wives, our Children, our Farms, and other property which we leave behind us. or, in this state of hostile seperation, are we to take the two first (the latter cannot be removed), to perish in a Wilderness, with hunger, cold and nakedness? If Peace takes place, never sheath your Swords Says he untill you have obtained full and ample justice; this dreadful alternative, of either deserting our Country in the extremest hour of her distress, or turning our Arms against it, (which is the apparent object, unless Congress can be compelled into instant compliance) has something so shocking in it, that humanity revolts at the idea. My God! what can this writer have in view, by recommending such measures? Can he be a friend to the Army? Can he be a friend to this Country? Rather, is he not an insidious Foe? . . .

But here, Gentlemen, I will drop the curtain, because it wd. be as imprudent in me to assign my reasons for this opinion, as it would be insulting to your conception, to suppose you stood in need of them. A moment's reflection will convince every dispassionate Mind of the physical impossibility of carrying either proposal into execution.

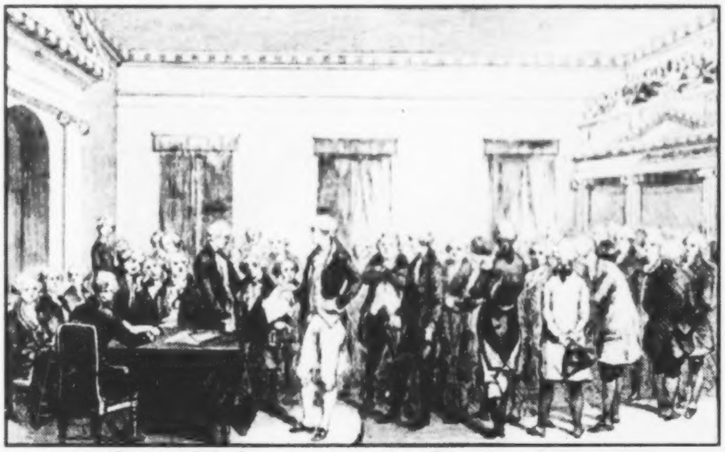
. . . With respect to the advice given by the Author, to suspect the man, who shall recommend moderate measures and longer forbearance, I spurn it, as every Man, who regards that liberty, and reveres that justice for which we contend, undoubtedly must; for if Men are to be precluded from offering their Sentiments on a matter, which may involve the most serious and alarming consequences, that can invite the consideration of Mankind, reason is of no use to us; the freedom of Speech may be taken away, and, dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep, to the Slaughter.

I can not do justice to my own belief, and what I have great reason to conceive is the intention of Congress, conclude this Address, without giving it as my decided opinion, that that Honble Body, entertain exalted sentiments of the Services of the Army; and, from a full conviction of its merits and sufferings, will do it compleat justice. That their endeavors, to discover and establish funds for this purpose, have been unwearied, and will not cease, till they have succeeded, I have not a doubt. But, like all other large Bodies, where there is a variety of different Interests to reconcile, their deliberations are slow. Why then should we distrust them? and, in consequence of that distrust, adopt measures, which may cast a shade over that glory which, has been so justly acquired; and tarnish the reputation of an Army which is celebrated thro' all Europe, for its fortitude and patriotism? and for what is this done? to bring the object we seek nearer? No! most certainly, in my opinion, it will cast it at a greater distance. . . .

I . . . pledge myself in the most unequivocal manner, to exert whatever ability I am possessed of, in your favor, let me entreat you, Gentlemen, on your part, not to take any measures, which, viewed in the calm light of reason, will lessen the dignity, and sully the glory you have hitherto maintained; let me request you to rely on the plighted faith of your Country, and place a full confidence in the purity of the intentions of Congress . . . And let me conjure you, in the name of our common Country, as you value your own sacred honor, as you respect the rights of humanity, and as you regard the Military and national character of America, to express your utmost horror and detestation of the Man who wishes, under any specious pretences, to overturn the liberties of our Country, and who wickedly attempts to open the flood Gates of Civil discord, and deluge our rising Empire in Blood. . . . You will give one more distinguished proof of unexampled patriotism and patient virtue, rising superior to the pressure of the most complicated sufferings; And you will, by the dignity of your Conduct, afford occasion for Posterity to say, when speaking of the glorious example you have exhibited to mankind, "had this day been wanting, the World had never seen the last stage of perfection to which human nature is capable of attaining."

Source: Washington, *Writings,* selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 496–500.

WASHINGTON'S ADDRESS TO CONGRESS RESIGNING HIS COMMISSION



George Washington resigning his commission.
The American Revolution: A Picture Sourcebook,
Dover Publications, 1975

Mr. President: The great events on which my resignation depended having at length taken place; I have now the honor of offering my resignation depended having at length taken place; I have now the honor of offering my sincere Congratulations to Congress and of presenting myself before them to surrender into their hands the trust committed to me, and to claim the indulgence of retiring from the Service of my Country.

Happy in the confirmation of our Independence and Sovereignty, and pleased with the oppertunity afforded the United States of becoming a respectable Nation, I resign with satisfaction the Appointment I accepted with diffidence. A diffidence in my abilities to accomplish so arduous a task, which however was superseded by a confidence in the rectitude of our Cause, the support of the Supreme Power of the Union, and the patronage of Heaven.

The Successful termination of the War has verified the most sanguine expectations, and my gratitude for the interposition of Providence, and the assistance I have received from my Countrymen, encreases with every review of the momentous Contest.

While I repeat my obligations to the Army in general, I should do injustice to my own feelings not to acknowledge in this place the peculiar Services and distinguished merits of the Gentlemen who have been attached to my person during the War. It was impossible the choice of confidential Officers to compose my family should have been more fortunate. Permit me Sir, to recommend in particular those, who have continued in Service to the present moment, as worthy of the favorable notice and patronage of Congress.

I consider it an indispensable duty to close this last solemn act of my Official life, by commending the Interests of our dearest Country to the protection of Almighty God, and those who have the superintendence of them, to his holy keeping.

Having now finished the work assigned me, I retire from the great theatre of Action; and bidding an Affectionate farewell to this August body under whose orders I have so long acted. I here offer my Commission, and take my leave of all the employments of public life.

Annapolis, December 23, 1783

Source: Washington, *Writings,* selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 547–48.

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LESSON THREE
GEORGE WASHINGTON AND THE CONSTITUTION

A. LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To compare and contrast the powers held by the central government under the Articles of Confederation to those of the Constitution.
- To explain the importance of Shays' Rebellion and assess Washington's reaction to events in Massachusetts.
- To examine the Committee of Detail's draft of the preamble of the Constitution and explain how it differed in wording from the adopted preamble.

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

George Washington's important role in bringing about the success of the American Revolution stands as an incontestable legacy. From the time he assumed command of the Continental Army in 1775, through the period including the promulgation of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the formal conclusion of the Revolutionary War in 1783, his dedication and devotion to the cause of liberty was unsurpassed. As he resigned his commission as Commander in Chief at the end of 1783, Washington retired from public life on a proud and optimistic note.

By 1785, however, Washington had cause, like many of his contemporaries, to be alarmed about the future of the American experiment in democratic government. Only two years after the signing of the Treaty of Paris officially ended the Revolutionary War, there was abundant reason to wonder whether the powers of the central government under the Articles of Confederation were sufficient to ensure the future of the nascent United States.

A civil uprising that occurred in western Massachusetts in 1786–87 seemed to confirm Washington's doubts about the instability of the Confederation government, as farmers in that state (among others) took up arms to protest the dire economic conditions of the time. Led by Daniel Shays, a former captain in the Continental Army, the rebels in Massachusetts attempted to capture the federal arsenal at Springfield and harassed leading merchants, lawyers, and supporters of the state government. The rebellion was finally ended when the state militia under the command of General Benjamin Lincoln crushed the revolt in several engagements in the winter of 1787.

When the Congress called upon the states to select delegates to attend a Federal Convention to meet in Philadelphia in 1787 for the purpose of amending the Articles of Confederation, Virginia selected Washington as one of its delegates. Washington refused the appointment. He repeatedly told colleagues that if he attended he would violate a solemn pledge he made to the American people to take "leave of all the employments of public life." Colleagues in Virginia and prominent persons from throughout the nation who sought a change in the

Articles of Confederation put enormous pressure on Washington to attend. From a careful study of correspondence between Washington and James Madison it appears that Washington had another motive for not attending. He had no interest in attending a convention that would not drastically alter the frame of government. When convinced that change was in the air, Washington agreed to attend the convention.

Washington was elected as the presiding officer at the Federal Convention, and therefore rarely contributed his opinions to the debates and deliberations surrounding the writing of the Constitution. That said, however, his presence at the proceedings was of far more than ceremonial importance. As the most esteemed and respected leader of the time, his participation and support in the crafting of a new form of government was of a paramount, albeit largely undocumented, nature.

C. LESSON ACTIVITIES

In order to provide the proper context for this lesson, review the powers held by the central government under the Articles of Confederation with those under our present Constitution. [Many textbooks provide a chart comparing the powers granted Congress under the Articles of Confederation with those provided for in the Federal Constitution of 1787.]

1. Have each student analyze Washington's letter to James McHenry on August 22, 1785 (Student Handout 12). Highlight the issues Washington raised about the government of the United States at that time. What did he believe to be its strengths, its weaknesses? Which sentence or two best captures his point of view on the subject of government?

2. Use an overhead projector to display a transparency of the November 7, 1786 manuscript of Washington's letter to General Benjamin Lincoln regarding Shays' Rebellion (Student Handout 13) or distribute a copy to each student. Have students transcribe the document. Use a transparency of the typewritten transcribed version to check students' work, and lead the class in a discussion of Washington's concerns in late 1786. What were the specific events of the past eight years that he referred to as "the goodly fabric?" What do you think was the answer to his question about "the cause of all these commotions" in Massachusetts? Compare the tone of this speech with the previous documents, which were written only a few years before.

3. Have students pair up, then pass out excerpts of Washington's letters to Henry Knox (February 3, and February 25, 1787) (Student Handout 14). Have students read quietly, then work together to summarize the essential message of the two letters to Knox. Compare the events described in these documents to the correspondence to General Lincoln. What has happened to Shays' Rebellion in the intervening months?

4. Remind students that Washington was the presiding officer at the Federal Convention held in Philadelphia in 1787, and therefore rarely contributed his opinions to the debates and deliberations surrounding the writing of the Constitution. His presence at the proceedings, however, was of far more than ceremonial importance. As the most es-

teemed and respected leader of the time, his participation and support in the crafting of a new form of government was of a paramount, albeit largely undocumented, nature.

5. Use an overhead projector to lead the class in a discussion of the Committee of Detail's draft of the preamble to the Constitution (Student Handout 15). What conclusions could be drawn from the wording "We the People of the States of . . . ?" From the documents you have read, how do you think Washington would have reacted to this preamble, presented to the convention on August 6, 1787? Why? Which of the documents studied in this lesson support your suppositions?

6. Conclude this lesson by using an overhead transparency to project a copy of Washington's actual diary entry of August 6, 1787 (Student Handout 16). Have students assume the role of George Washington and complete this diary entry by writing a reaction to the Committee of Detail's draft of the first preamble to the Constitution.

   Remind students to refer to earlier statements or opinions in order to complete this assignment. As an alternative writing assignment ask students to use Washington's views as a means to consider how he would compare the "We the People of the States . . ." preamble draft with the one which was ultimately adopted as the preamble of the Constitution, "We the People of the United States . . ."

D. Extended Activities

1. Divide the class into 6 groups and give each group one of the six letters below from George Washington to read and discuss. Have each group prepare a short oral report to the class summarizing Washington's views on the Articles of Confederation as expressed in their respective letters. As an entire class discuss Washington's concerns regarding the structure of government under the Articles of Confederation.

2. Examine George Washington's Circular to State Governments from Newburgh, June 8, 1783. Compile a list of things that Washington believed were essential for the well being of the United States as an independent power. Assume the role of the governor or a member of the state legislature and write a response to Washington either supporting or refuting the views he expressed in the Circular Letters.

Documents for Extended Activities*

Document	Date	Source
Letter from Washington to:	----	Washington, *Writings*, in Rhodehamel
Nathanael Greene	March 31, 1783	p. 504
Alexander Hamilton	March 31, 1783	pp. 504-505
Marquis de Lafayette	April 5, 1783	pp. 508-11
Tench Tilghman	April 24, 1783	p. 515
John Augustine Washington	June 15, 1783	pp. 526-28
William Gordon	July 8, 1783	pp. 530-33
Circular to State Governments	June 8, 1783	pp. 516–26

*These documents are also available by searching the Library of Congress Web site: http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/mgwquery.html

LETTER TO JAMES MCHENRY

Mount Vernon 22d Augt 1785.

Dear Sir,

. . . As I have ever been a friend to adequate powers in Congress, without wch it is evident to me we never shall establish a National character, or be considered on a respectable footing by the powers of Europe, I am sorry I cannot agree with you in sentiment not to enlarge them for the regulation of Commerce. I have neither time nor abilities to enter upon a full discussion of this subject; but it should seem to me, that, your arguments against it—principally—that some States may be more benefitted than others by a Commercial regulation, applies to every matter of general utility; for where is the case in which this argument may not be used, in a greater, or less degree. We are either a United people under one head, & for Foederal purposes, or, we are thirteen independent Sovereignties, eternally counteracting each other. If the former, whatever such a Majority of the States, as the Constitution requires, conceives to be for the benefit of the whole, should, in my humble opinion, be submitted to by the Minority. Let the Southern States always be represented. Let them Act more in unison—Let them declare freely, & boldly what is for the interest, & what is prejudicial to their Constituents, and there will—there must be, an accomodating spirit. In the establishment of an Act for Navigation, this, in a particular manner ought, & will, doubtless, be attended to; and if the assent of nine (or as some propose, of Eleven) States is necessary to give validity to a Commercial system, it insures this measure, or the Act cannot be obtained—Wherein then lyes the danger? but if your fears are in danger of being reallized, cannot certain provisos in the Law guard against the evil? I see no difficulty in this if the Southern delegates would give their attendance in Congress, and follow the example, if such an one should beset them, of hanging together to counteract combinations.

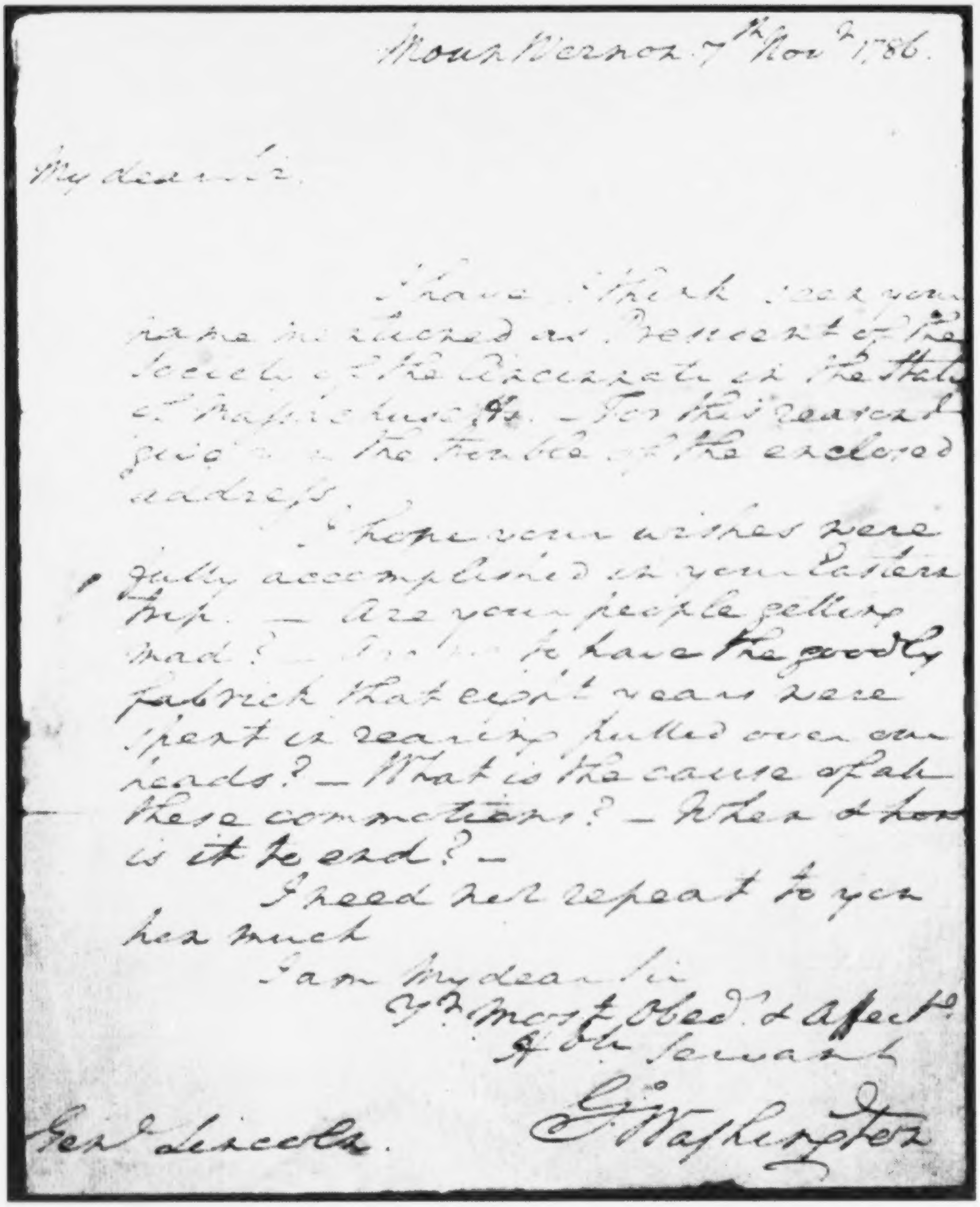
I confess to you candidly that I can foresee no evil greater, than disunion—than those unreasonable jealousies (I say unreasonable, because I would have a proper jealousy always awake, and the United States always upon the watch, to prevent individual States from infracting the Constitution, with impunity) which are continually poisoning our minds, and filling them with imaginary evils, to the prevention of real ones. As you have asked the question, I answer, I do not know that we can enter a War of Imposts with G. Britain, or any other foreign Power, but we are certain that this War has been waged against us by the former, professedly, upon a belief that we never could unite in opposition to it. and I believe there is no way of putting an end to—at least of stopping the increase of it, but to convince them of the contrary. Our Trade in all points of view is an essential to G.B., as hers is to us—and she will exchange it upon reciprocal & liberal terms, if an advantage is not to be obtained. It can hardly be supposed, I think, that the carrying business will devolve wholly on the States you have named; or remain long with them if it should—for either G.B. will depart from her present selfish system, or the policy of the Southern States in forming a general Act of Navigation, or by Laws individually passed by their respective Legislatures, will devise ways & means to encourage seamen for the transportation of their own produce—or for the encouragement of Manufactures; but admitting the contrary, if the Union is considered as permanent, and on this I presume all superstructures are built, had we not better encourage Seamen among ourselves with less imports, than divide it with foreigners & by encreasing them, ruin our Merchants; & greatly injure the mass of our Citizens?

To sum up the whole, I foresee, or think I do it, many advantages which will result from giving powers of this kind to Congress (if a sufficient number of States are required to exercise them) without any evil save those which may proceed from inattention or want of wisdom in the formation of the Act. whilst without them, we stand, I conceive, in a ridiculous point of view in the eyes of the Nations of the Earth; with whom we are attempting to enter into Commercial Treaties without means of carrying them into effect and who must see, & feel, that the Union, or the States individually, are Sovereigns, as it best suits their purposes. In a word that we are one Nation today, & thirteen tomorrow—Who will treat with us on such terms? But perhaps I have gone too far, & therefore shall only add that, with great esteem & regard I am—Dear Sir Yr Most Obedt & Affecte Hble Servt.

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 588–90

E PLURIBUS UNUM

MANUSCRIPT TO GENERAL BENJAMIN LINCOLN, NOVEMBER 7, 1786



Mount Vernon 7th Novr 1786.

My dear Sir,

I have, I think, seen your name mentioned as President of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Massachusetts &c. — For this reason I give you the trouble of the enclosed address.

I hope your wishes were fully accomplished in your Eastern trip. — Are your people getting mad? — Are we to have the goodly fabrick that eight years were spent in rearing pulled over our heads? — What is the cause of all these commotions? — When & how is it to end? —

I need not repeat to you how much

I am My dear Sir
Yr most Obedt & Affecte
Hble Servant
Go Washington

Genl Lincoln.

Source: George Washington Collection, The Huntington Library

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TRANSCRIPTION OF THE LETTER TO GENERAL BENJAMIN LINCOLN

My dear Sr,

I have, I think seen your name mentioned as President of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Massachusetts. For this reason I give you the trouble of the enclosed address.

I hope your wishes were fully accomplished in your Eastern trip. — Are your people getting mad? —Are we to have the goodly fabric that eight years were spent in sewing pulled over our heads? —What is the cause of all these commotions? —When & how is it to end?

I need not repeat to you how much

I am My dear sir

Yr. Most Obed. & Affect. Servant
G. Washington

WASHINGTON'S LETTER TO HENRY KNOX

Mount Vernon 3d Feby 1787

My dear Sir,

I feel my self exceedingly obliged to you for the full, & friendly communications in your letters of the 14th 21st & 25th ult.; and shall (critically as matters are described in the latter) be extremely anxious to know the issue of the movements of the forces that were assembling, the one to support, the other to oppose the constitutional rights of Massachusetts. The moment is, indeed, important! If government shrinks, or is unable to enforce its laws; fresh manoeuvres will be displayed by the insurgents—anarchy & confusion must prevail—and every thing will be turned topsy turvey in that State; where it is not probable the mischiefs will terminate. . . .

The legallity of this Convention I do not means to discuss—nor how problematical the issue of it may be. That powers are wanting, none can deny. Through what medium they are to be derived, will, like other matters, engage public attention. That which takes the shortest course to obtain them, will, in my opinion, under present circumstances, be found best. Otherwise, like a house on fire, whilst the most regular mode of extinguishing it is contending for, the building is reduced to ashes. My opinion of the energetic wants of the federal government are well known—publickly & privately, I have declared it; and however constitutionally it may be for Congress to point out the defects of the foederal System, I am strongly inclined to believe that it would not be found the most efficatious channel for the recommendation, more especially the alterations, to flow—for reasons too obvious to enumerate.

The System on which you seem disposed to build a national government is certainly more energetic, and I dare say, in every point of view is more desirable than the present one; which, from experience, we find is not only slow—debilitated—and liable to be thwarted by every breath, but is defective in that secrecy, which for the accomplishment of many of the most important national purposes, is indispensably necessary; and besides, having the Legislative, Executive & Judiciary departments concentered, is exceptionable. But at the same time I give this opinion, I believe that the political machine will yet be much tumbled & tossed, and possibly be wrecked altogether, before such a system as you have defined, will be adopted. The darling Sovereignties of the States individually, The Governors elected & elect. The Legislators—with a long train of etcetra whose political consequences will be lessened, if not anihilated, would give their weight of opposition to such a revolution. But I may be speaking without book, for scarcely ever going off my own farms I see few people who do not call upon me; & am very little acquainted with the Sentiments of the great world; indeed, after what I have seen, or rather after what I have heard, I shall be surprized at nothing; for if three years ago, any person had told me that at this day, I should see such a formidable rebellion against the laws & constitutions of our own making as now appears I should have thought him a bedlamite—a fit subject for a mad house.

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 634–36.

WASHINGTON'S LETTER TO HENRY KNOX

Mount Vernon 25th Feb. 1787

Accept, my dear General Knox my affectionate thanks for your obliging favors of the 29th, 30th, & 31st of Jany and 1st 8th & 12th of the present month.

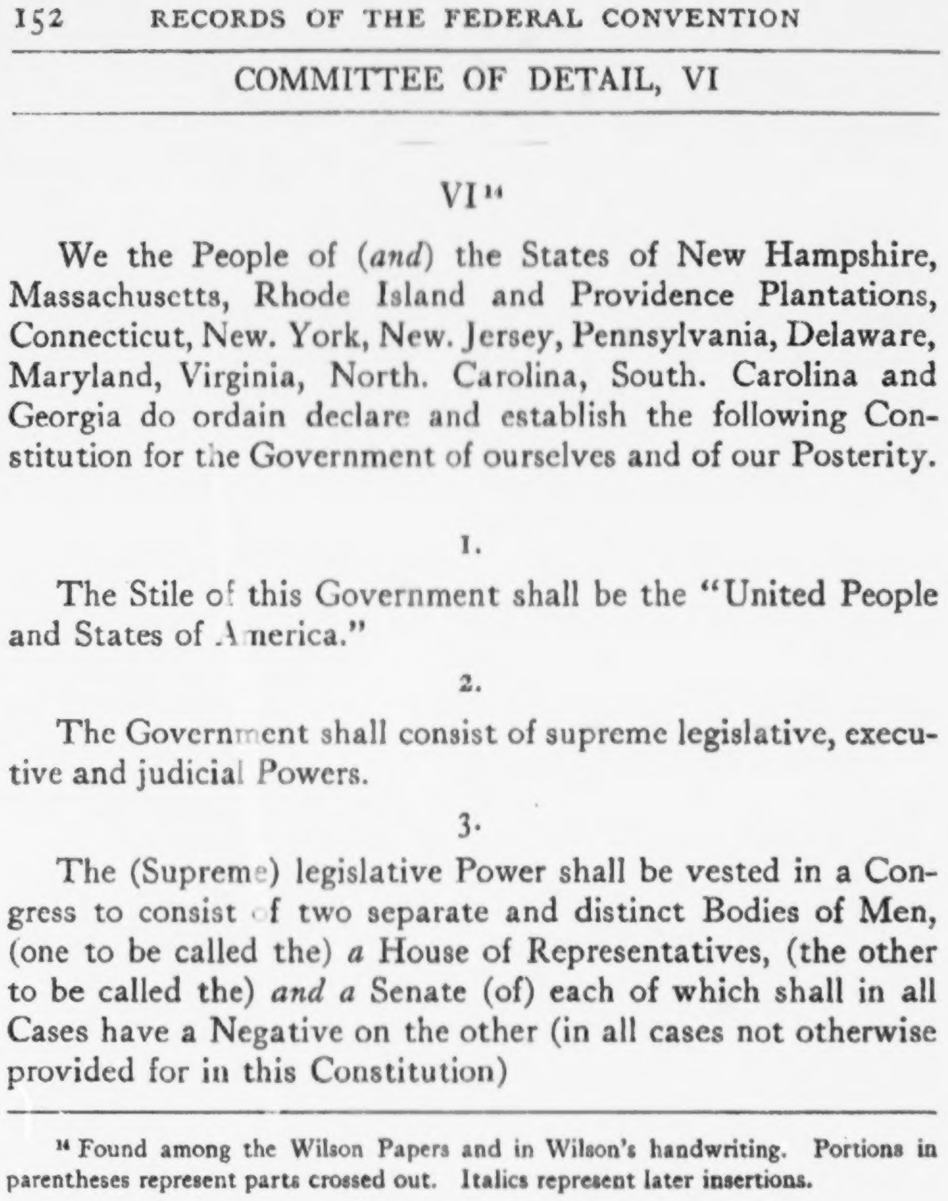
They were indeed, exceedingly satisfactory, and relieving to my mind which has been filled with great & anxious uneasiness for the issue of General Lincoln's operations, and the dignity of Government.

On the prospect of the happy termination of this insurrection I sincerely congratulate you; hoping that good may result from the cloud of evils which threatened not only the hemisphere of Massachusetts but by spreading its baneful influence, the tranquillity of the Union. Surely Shays must be either a weak man—the dupe of some characters who are yet behind the curtain—or has been deceived by his followers. Or which may yet be more likely, he did not conceive that there was energy enough in the Government to bring matters to the crisis to which they have been pushed. It is to be hoped the General Court of that State concurred in the report of the Committee, that a rebellion did actually exist. This would be decisive, and the most likely means of putting the finishing stroke to the business.

. . . Our Affairs, generally seem really, to be approaching to some awful crisis. God only knows what the result will be. It shall be my part to hope for the best; as to see this Country happy whilst I am gliding down the stream of life in tranquil retirement is so much the wish of my Soul, that nothing on the side Elysium can be placed in competition with it. . . .

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, p. 640.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF DETAIL



COMMITTEE OF DETAIL, VI

VI[14]

We the People of (*and*) the States of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New. York, New. Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North. Carolina, South. Carolina and Georgia do ordain declare and establish the following Constitution for the Government of ourselves and of our Posterity.

1.

The Stile of this Government shall be the "United People and States of America."

2.

The Government shall consist of supreme legislative, executive and judicial Powers.

3.

The (Supreme) legislative Power shall be vested in a Congress to consist of two separate and distinct Bodies of Men, (one to be called the) *a* House of Representatives, (the other to be called the) *and a* Senate (of) each of which shall in all Cases have a Negative on the other (in all cases not otherwise provided for in this Constitution)

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[14] Found among the Wilson Papers and in Wilson's handwriting. Portions in parentheses represent parts crossed out. Italics represent later insertions.

Max Ferrand, ed. *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787,* vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1911), p. 152.

WASHINGTON'S DIARY
AUGUST 6, 1787

Monday 6th. Met, according to adjournment in Convention, & received the rept. of the Committee. Dined at Mr. Morris's and drank Tea at Mr. Meridiths.

Source: George Washington Diary as cited in *Supplement to Max Farrand's The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787* edited by James H. Hutson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 212.

LESSON FOUR
GEORGE WASHINGTON AS PRESIDENT

A. OBJECTIVES

- To analyze major domestic and foreign policy issues that confronted the Washington administration.
- To assess the importance of Washington's role in establishing the precedence of the executive office.
- To evaluate Washington's effectiveness as a political leader.

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Washington had expressed a reluctance to assume the presidency in 1789. In a letter to Henry Knox, Washington described his feeling on the eve of his inauguration as "not unlike those of a culprit who is going to the place of his execution." As President of the Untied States, Washington ventured onto untrodden ground. He intended to be deliberate in his actions to establish a solid foundation for the government and mold the office of the presidency. Keenly aware of this challenge, Washington selected advisors to offer suggestions in meeting the pressing needs of the new nation. Thomas Jefferson served as Secretary of State; Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury; Henry Knox, Secretary of War; and Edmund Randolph, Attorney General. Before settling into the office of chief executive, controversy arose between Jefferson and Hamilton over the state of the nation's financial obligations. Ultimately, Washington sided with Hamilton and supported his economic plan calling for the establishment of a national bank, the assumption of state debts, funding the national debt at par value, and imposing an excise tax.

By 1792, George Washington had grown weary of the partisanship which had plagued much of his first presidency. He was convinced that political parties were a source of corruption, and that partisan politics would ruin the hard-won consensus that had brought unity to the early republic. Tired of public life and divisive politics, Washington was eager for retirement to Mount Vernon. The President went so far as to prepare a draft of his farewell address and to ask James Madison to put it in final form. Although Madison reluctantly drafted the address, he, with the support of Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, Edmund Randolph, Henry Knox, and others, convinced Washington to stay one more term. They believed that, in the existing political climate, the battle over Washington's successor would tear the country apart. "North and South will hang together, if they have you to hang on," argued Jefferson, in spite of Washington's clear preference for the Hamiltonian fiscal policy over his own.

Washington reluctantly accepted a second term, "after a long and painful conflict in my own breast," to save the great experiment which he had helped to begin. He was elected unanimously.

During his second term Washington faced growing unrest in the West and South to the excise tax imposed as part of Hamilton's financial program. By 1794, Washington took bold action to put down what he conceived as the greatest threat to the nation since Shays' Rebellion. Washington sent a sizable military force into western Pennsylvania to put down the Whiskey Rebellion. His policy aroused considerable hostility, especially in the Republican press. The second administration, however was dominated by foreign policy issues. Continued struggle with Indian nations, British control of forts in the Ohio Valley, navigation of the Mississippi River, and the turmoil in Europe over the French Revolution occupied much of Washington's energies.

With the outbreak of war between revolutionary France and monarchical Britain in 1793, partisanship in Philadelphia reached new levels of intensity. Although Washington issued his "Proclamation of Neutrality" in April, announcing the decision to "adopt and pursue a conduct friendly and impartial towards the Belligerent Powers," Federalist and Republican factions were anything but impartial. The Hamiltonians supported England, the Jeffersonians, France. By refusing to support America's ally, Washington was assumed to favor the English and to be aligned politically with Hamilton. However, Washington had embraced neutrality to preserve the United States. Neutrality was a means of buying time for America. Taking sides in the conflict would be all the more disastrous in light of the ongoing political struggles at home.

General Anthony Wayne's victory at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in Ohio in 1794 and the Treaty of Greenville (1795) helped to bring an end to Indian resistance in the Northwest. The ratification of the Jay Treaty, over violent protests from the south and west, secured some limited trade with the British and secured the evacuation of the British from forts in the Ohio Valley. A treaty with Spain in 1795 granted the United States free navigation of the Mississippi River but failed to settle issues over the southern and western boundaries.

By May, 1796, Washington definitively decided not to accept a third term. He drafted his farewell address and enlisted Hamilton, Madison's political rival, to revise Madison's 1792 version. Washington realized that the address didn't reflect the changes that had taken place both at home and abroad since the first draft. If Washington's first administration had established the foundations for the internal organization of the republic, his second administration had laid out the course for the management of foreign affairs. Hamilton's contribution was to create the first comprehensive statement of the principles of American foreign policy. Because Hamilton was opposed to American involvement in a war, he emphasized the necessity of neutrality and peace.

Washington's "Farewell Address," published in the *Daily American Advertiser* in September 19, 1796, made public his decision to retire from the presidency. His "Farewell Address" soon achieved a monumentality that has encouraged some to regard it as a source of timeless wisdom. But its author had intended nothing of the sort. The document was a product of the political passions of the 1790s. Washington's audience was his living countrymen, not the unborn Americans of future centuries. For George Washington did not know, and would die not knowing, whether the United States was destined to endure for centuries.

C. LESSON ACTIVITIES

This lesson provides a retrospective on Washington's presidency, as seen through his eyes. Students will use "The Farewell Address" and other primary source documents to analyze the important domestic and foreign events that helped shape Washington's policy as first president, and to better understand the principles that guided him. This lesson should serve as a culminating activity after students have studied the first and second administrations.

1. Divide students into groups of 6. Ask students to brainstorm major domestic and foreign events from Washington's first and second administrations. (Students can consult their textbooks if needed.) Have students create a timeline on a large piece of butcher paper. Ask students to discuss and categorize each event as "domestic" or "foreign." Label the timeline accordingly.

2. Hand out primary source documents, selected from Student Handouts 17–22, to each group member. Make sure that each student in a group receives a different document set. Ask each student to read their documents, using the "Document Analysis Worksheet" to guide them in their analysis (Student Handout 1, p. 6).

3. In their groups, ask students to discuss which passages in their documents relate to which events in the timeline. How does the document reveal George Washington's guiding principles, and how does it illuminate his conduct of domestic and foreign policy?

   Ask the students to individually do a "quick-write" on their document, summing up the group's conclusions about the meaning of the document.

4. Hand out copies of "The Farewell Address" (Student Handout 23) and ask students to read it for homework.

   a. In their groups, ask students to select passages from "The Farewell Address" that refer to the events in the chronologies they have compiled.

   b. Convene the whole class and hold a discussion on the major admonitions and recommendations that Washington was trying to make in his "Farewell Address." Divide the class into two groups, one focusing on domestic policy and the other on foreign policy (including the issue over isolationism), and have them debate the pros and cons within the historical context of the 1790s as a class activity. If desired, students can debate from the perspective of either Jeffersonians or Hamiltonians.

D. EXTENDED LESSON IDEAS

1. Hamilton's Bank of the United States, and the vision of America's future it implied, were abhorrent to Virginia Republicans like Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Research Federalist and Republican arguments for and against the Bank of the United States. Write a position paper from either a Federalist or Republican perspective advising President Washington on the action he should take. Why do you think Washington supported Hamilton's proposal?

2. George Washington raised no objection to the decision to name the new federal capital "Washington, the District of Columbia." He personally picked a site about ten miles from Mount Vernon and made sure that a grand metropolis, worthy of a great nation, was laid out. Research the compromise that ultimately paved the way for the establishment of the capital in land donated by Virginia and Maryland.

3. Ask students to assess the extent to which Washington's foreign policy, as delineated in "The Farewell Address," shaped and influenced foreign policy throughout the nation's history.

4. Ask students to debate the pros and cons of isolationism throughout other eras of United States history such as the Monroe Doctrine, Spanish American War, World War I, Wilson's 14 Points, the League of Nations, World War II, the Marshall Plan, the Truman Doctrine, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Persian Gulf War.

5. Show students the old and new $20 bills with Grant's image. Tell several students that they have been commissioned to redesign the $1 bill and are not bound to use the same Gilbert Stuart image that appears on the current bill. Have students examine several images of Washington including the Gilbert Stuart, Jean-Antoine Houdon sculptured bust, Charles Willson Peale's "Washington at Princeton" and others that they may find in textbooks. Select an image and explain their choice. See Student Handout 24.

PRIMARY SOURCE READINGS
Group One

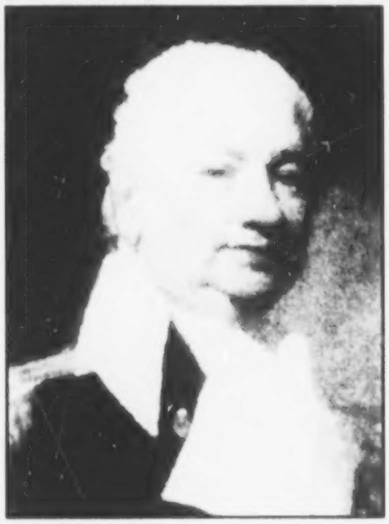
George Washington, letter to Henry Knox

Washington wrote of his reluctance to assume the office of the Presidency. In a letter to his friend Henry Knox, Washington poured out his fears as he prepared to risk his hard-won fame by taking on the presidency. He also recorded entries in his diary about leaving his beloved Mount Vernon. Near the close of his first term, Washington wrote James Madison of his desire to retire from public life and asked Madison to help him write a farewell address.

My dear Sir, Mount Vernon April 1st, 1789

. . . . In confidence I can assure you . . . that my movements to the chair of Government will be accompanied by feelings not unlike those of a culprit who is going to the place of his execution: so unwilling am I, in the evening of a life nearly consumed in public cares, to quit a peaceful abode for an Ocean of difficulties, without that competency of political skill—abilities & inclination which is necessary to manage the helm. I am sensible, that I am embarking the voice of my Countrymen and a good name of my own, on this voyage, but what returns will be made for them—Heaven alone can foretell. Integrity and firmness is all I can promise—these, be the voyage long or short; never shall forsake me although I may be deserted by all men. For of the consolations which are to be derived from these (under any circumstances) the world cannot deprive me. With best wishes for Mrs. Knox, & sincere friendship for yourself—I remain
Your affectionate
G Washington

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, p. 726.



Henry Knox
Painting by Gilbert Stuart
Dictionary of American Portraits (Dover Publications, 1967)

George Washington's Diary Entries April 16 and 23, 1789

About ten o'clock I bade adieu to Mount Vernon, to private life, and to domestic felicity; and with a mind oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express, set out for New York in company with Mr. Thompson, and colonel Humphries, with the best dispositions to render service to my country in obedience to its call, but with less hope of answering its expectations.

The display of boats which attended and joined us on this occasion, some with vocal and some with instrumental music on board; the decorations of the ships, the roar of cannon, and the loud acclamations of the people which rent the skies, as I passed along the wharves, filled my mind with sensations as painful (considering the reverse of this scene, which may be the case after all my labors to do good) as they are pleasing.

George Washington Collection, The Huntington Library.

George Washington, letter to James Madison, May 20, 1792

My dear Sir, Mount Vernon May 20th. 1792.

. . . . I still look forward to the fulfillment of my fondest and most ardent wishes to spend the remainder of my days (which I can not expect will be many) in ease & tranquility.

Nothing short of conviction that my dereliction of the Chair of Government (if it should be the desire of the people to continue me in it) would involve the Country in serious disputes respecting the chief Magestrate, & the disagreeable consequences which might result therefrom in the floating, & divided opinions which seem to prevail at present, could, in any wise, induce me to relinquish the determination I have formed: and of this I do not see how any evidence can be obtained previous to the Election. My vanity, I am sure, is not of that cast as to allow me to view the subject in this light.

. . . I will, without apology desire (if the measure in itself should strike you as proper, & likely to produce public good, or private honor) that you would turn your thoughts to a Valedictory address from me to the public; expressing in plain & modest terms—that having been honored with the Presidential Chair, and to the best of my abilities contributed to the Organization & Administration of the government—that having arrived at a period of life when the private Walks of it, in the shade of retirement, becomes necessary, and will be most pleasing to me; and the spirit of the government may render a rotation in the Elective Officers of it more congenial with their ideas of liberty & safety, that I take my leave of them as a public man . . .

GWashington

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 804–05.

George Washington, letter to James Madison, August 5, 1789

President Washington consulted James Madison, the "Father of the Constitution," on the workings of that untried document. The Constitution required the president to make foreign treaties with the "Advice and Consent of the Senate." But no one could say what form "Advice and Consent" should take. The president asked Madison "would an Oral or written communication be best?" Washington's single attempt to negotiate a treaty with the Senate was a failure and has never been repeated by any of his presidential successors.

My dear Sir,

I want to communicate two matters to Congress; the substance of which is contained in the enclosed paper.—The first requires to be decided upon before the proposed adjournment that take—but my motive for communicating thereafter, at this time, is only to fix the other, and to premote enquiry against the next meeting.

Whether would an oral or written communication be best?

If the first what mode is to be adopted to effect it?

I would thank you ; my good Sir, for amending the enclosed address, if you have liezure, by adding to, or takening out, such parts as you may think had better be expunged.

I am most affectionately,
Yours
GWashington

Source: George Washington Collection, The Huntington Library

PRIMARY SOURCE READINGS
Group Two

Request of the Cabinet

Washington sent John Jay to Britain in 1794 to negotiate a treaty. The Jay Treaty was submitted to the Senate in 1795 for ratification and after considerable debate passed by the required two-thirds margin. The South and West expressed considerable opposition to the treaty and the following year the House of Representatives requested that Washington provide the House with papers pertaining to the treaty negotiations.

Philadelphia, March 25, 1796.

Sir:

The resolution moved in the House of Representatives, for the papers relative to the negotiation of the Treaty with G. Britain having passed in the affirmative, I request your opinion,

Whether that branch of Congress hath, or hath not a right, by the Constitution, to call for those papers?

Whether, if it does not possess the right, it would be expedient under the circumstances of this particular case, to furnish them?

And, in either case, in what terms would it be most proper to comply with, or to refuse the request of the House?

These opinions in writing, and your attendance, will be expected at ten o'Clock tomorrow.

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 929–30.

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To the House of Representatives

United States, March 30, 1796.

Gentlemen of the House of Representatives:

With the utmost attention I have considered your resolution of the 24th instant, requesting me to lay before your House, a copy of the instructions to the Minister of the United States who negotiated the Treaty with the King of Great Britain, together with the correspondence and other documents relative to the Treaty, expecting such of the said papers as any existing negotiation may render improper to be disclosed.

. . . The nature of foreign negotiations requires caution; and their success must often depend on secrecy: and even when brought to a conclusion, a full disclosure of all the measures, demands, or eventual concessions, which may have been proposed or contemplated, would be extremely impolitic: for this might have a pernicious influences on future negotiations; or produce immediate inconveniences, perhaps danger and mischief, in relation to other powers. . . .

To admit then a right in the House of Representatives to demand, and to have as a matter of course, all the Papers respecting a negotiation with a foreign power, would be to establish a dangerous precedent. . . .

. . . [I]t is perfectly clear to my understanding, that the assent of the House of Representatives is not necessary to the validity of a treaty . . . . And as it is essential to the due administration of the government, that the boundaries fixed by the constitution between the different departments should be preserved: A just regard to the Constitution and to the duty of my Office, under all the circumstances of this case, forbids a complyance with your request.

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 930–32.

PRIMARY SOURCE READINGS
Group Three

George Washington, letter to Gouverneur Morris, October 13th, 1789

Gouverneur Morris traveled abroad on private business and while in Europe served on a brief mission to Britain and was appointed minister to France in 1792. On the outbreak of the French Revolution, Washington wrote to Morris reflecting positively on the revolution. Following the Reign of Terror, revolutionary France entered into a more conservative phrase. Washington's 1796 letter to Pierre Adet are reminiscent of his comments to Morris at the beginning of the Revolution.

Dear Sir, New York, October 13th, 1789

. . . . The revolution which has been effected in France is of so wonderful a nature that the mind can hardly realise the fact—If it ends as our last accounts to the first of August predict that nation will be the most powerful and happy in Europe; but I fear though it has gone triumphantly through the first paroxysm, it is not the last it has to encounter before matters are finally settled. In a word the revolution is of too great magnitude to be effected in so short a space, and with the loss of so little blood—.

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, p. 746.

Letter to Pierre Adet
January 1, 1796

United States, January 1, 1796.

Born, Sir, in a land of liberty; having early learned its value; having engaged in a perilous conflict to defend it; having, in a word, devoted the best years of my life to secure its permanent establishment in my own country; my anxious recollections, my sympathetic feelings, and my best wishes are irresistibly excited, whensoever, in any country, I see an oppressed nation unfurl the banners of Freedom. But above all, the events of the French Revolution have produced the deepest solicitude, as well as the highest admiration. To call your nation brave, were to pronounce but common praise. Wonderful people! Ages to come will read with astonishment the history of your brilliant exploits! I rejoice, that the period of your toils and of your immense sacrifices, is approaching. I rejoice that the interesting revolutionary movements of so many years have issued in the formation of a constitution designed to give permanency to the great object for which you have contended. I rejoice that liberty, which you have so long embraced with enthusiasm, liberty, of which you have been the invincible defenders, now finds an asylum in the bosom of a regularly organized government; a government, which, being formed to secure the happiness of the French people, corresponds with the ardent wishes of my heart, while it gratifies the pride of every citizen of the United States, by its resemblance to their own. On these glorious events, accept, Sir, my sincere congratulations.

In delivering to you these sentiments, I express not my own feelings only, but those of my fellow citizens, in relation to the commencement, the progress, and the issue of the French revolution: and they will cordially join with me in purest wishes to the Supreme Being, that the citizens of our sister republic, our magnanimous allies, may soon enjoy in peace, that liberty which they have purchased at so great a price, and all the happiness which liberty can bestow. . . .

Source: George Washington Papers, Library of Congress

George Washington, letter to Jean Baptiste Ternant, October 14, 1791

Although Washington would later advise against involvement in foreign alliances, he chose to intervene in the Haitian rebellion.

Mount Vernon, September 24, 1791.

Sir:

I have not delayed a momt. since the receipt of your communications of the 22d. instant, in dispatching orders to the Secretary of the Treasury to furnish the money, and to the Secretary of War to deliver the Arms and Ammunition, which you have applied to me for.

Sincerely regretting, as I do, the cause which has given rise to this application; I am happy in the opportunity of testifying how well disposed the united States are to render every aid in their power to our good friends and Allies the French to quell "the alarming insurrection of the Negroes in Hispaniola" and of the ready disposition to effect it, of the Executive authority thereof.

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, p. 785.

PRIMARY SOURCE READINGS
GROUP FOUR
LETTERS TO THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

George Washington received numerous letters from religious communities wishing him success. In response to Jewish and Protestant communities, Washington thanked them for their support and expressed his commitment to the "liberty of conscience."

Letter to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, Rhode Island
August 18, 1790

Gentlemen

. . . The reflection on the days of difficulty and danger which are past is rendered the more sweet, from a consciousness that they are succeeded by days of uncommon prosperity and security. If we have wisdom to make the best use of the advantages with which we are now favored, we cannot fail, under the just administration of a good Government, to become a great and happy people.

The Citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy: a policy worthy of imitation. All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship. It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights. For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.

. . . May the Children of the Stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other Inhabitants; while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and figtree, and there shall be none to make him afraid. May the father of all mercies scatter light and not darkness in our paths, and make us all in our several vocations useful here, and in his own due time and way everlastingly happy.

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 766–67.

Touro Synagogue, Rhode Island
Touro Synagogue, designed by Peter Harrison, constructed in 1762. Photograph by Jack Boucher, 1971. Library of Congress.

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Letter to members of the New Church in Baltimore, Maryland
January 27, 1793

Gentlemen:

. . . We have abundant reason to rejoice that in this Land the light of truth and reason has triumphed over the power of bigotry and superstition, and that every person may here worship God according to the dictates of his own heart. In this enlightened Age and in this Land of equal liberty it is our boast, that a man's religious tenets will not forfeit the protection of the laws, nor deprive him of the right of attaining and holding the highest Offices that are known in the Untied States.

Your prayers for my present and future felicity are received with gratitude; and I sincerely wish, Gentlemen, that you may in your social and individual capacities taste those blessings which a gracious God bestows upon the Righteous.

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, p. 834

THE WHISKEY REBELLION

Farmers in the western regions of the United States objected to the excise tax placed on whiskey as part of Hamilton's financial program. Washington, alarmed by the seizure of tax men in western Pennsylvania, blamed "democratic societies" for stirring up the rebellion and called up 12,950 militiamen from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. Acting as Commander-in-Chief, Washington in his military uniform, led troops as far as Reading, Pennsylvania before turning over the command to Henry Lee. The rebellion was put down with little effort and ringleaders were pardoned by the President as one of his last acts before leaving office.

Letter to Henry Lee

German Town, August 26, 1794.

Dear Sir:

. . . As the Insurgents in the western counties of this State are resolved . . . to persevere in their rebellious conduct untill what they call the excise Law is repealed . . . ; it gives me sincere consolation amidst the regret with which I am filled, by such lawless and outrageous conduct, to find by your letter . . . that you are disposed to lend your *personal* aid to subdue this spirit, and to bring those people to a proper sense of their duty.

. . . It is with equal pride and satisfaction I add, that as far as my information extends, this insurrection is viewed with universal indignation and abhorrence; except by those who have never missed an opportunity by side blows, or otherwise, to aim their shafts at the general government. . . .

I consider this insurrection as the first *formidable* fruit of the Democratic Societies; brought forth I believe too prematurely for their own views, which may contribute to the annihilation of them.

That these societies were instituted by the *artful* and *designing* members . . . primarily to sow the seeds of jealousy and distrust among the people, of the government, by destroying all confidence in the Administration of it; and that these doctrines have been budding and blowing every since, is not new to any one, who is acquainted with the character of their leaders, and has been attentive to their manoeuvers. . . .

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 875–76.

Proclamation Concerning the Whiskey Rebellion

Philadelphia, September 25, 1794.

I, GEORGE WASHINGTON, President of the United States, in obedience to that high and irresistible duty, consigned to me by the Constitution, "to take care that the laws be faithfully executed;" deploring that the American name should be sullied by the outrages of citizens on their own Government; . . . resolved, in perfect reliance on that gracious Providence which so signally displays its goodness towards this country, to reduce the refractory to a due subordination to the laws . . . .

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, p. 883.

George Washington, Sixth Annual Message To Congress
November 1794

This is the president's 1794 Annual Message, now known as the State of the Union Address. Washington claimed that the state of the nation in 1794 was precarious. He was alarmed by the recent Whiskey Rebellion that he believed was fomented by opponents of his administration from the newly formed Democratic-Republican societies.

United States, November 19, 1794.

Fellow Citizens of the Senate and of the House of Representatives:

When we call to mind the gracious indulgence of Heaven, by which the American People became a nation; when we survey the general prosperity of our country, and look forward to the riches, power, and happiness, to which it seems destined; with the deepest regret do I announce to you, that during your recess, some of the citizens of the United States have been found capable of an insurrection. . . .

. . . During the session of the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety, it was expedient to exercise the legislative power, granted by the constitution of the United States, "to lay and collect excises." In a majority of the states, scarcely an objection was heard to this mode of taxation. In some, indeed, alarms were at first conceived, until they were banished by reason and patriotism. In the four western countries of Pennsylvania, a prejudice, fostered and embittered by the artifice of men . . . produced symptoms of riot and violence.

. . . I postponed the summoning . . . of the militia immediately into the field. But I required them to be held in readiness. . . . Pardon . . . was tendered to them by the government of the United States and that of Pennsylvania, upon no other condition, than a satisfactory assurance of obedience to the laws. . . . I ordered the militia to march, after once more admonishing the insurgents. . . .

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 887–90.

PROCLAMATION OF NEUTRALITY
Philadelphia, April 22, 1793

Whereas it appears that a state of war exists between Austria, Prussia, Sardinia, Great Britain, and the United Netherlands, on the one part, and France on the other; and the duty and interest of the United States require, that they should with sincerity and good faith adopt and pursue a conduct friendly and impartial towards the belligerent powers.

I have therefore thought fit by these presents, to declare the disposition of the United States to observe the conduct aforesaid towards those powers respectively; and to exhort and warn the citizens of the United States carefully to avoid all acts and proceedings whatsoever, which may in any manner tend to contravene such disposition.

And I do hereby also make known, that whosoever of the citizens of the United States shall render himself liable to punishment or forfeiture under the law of nations, by committing, aiding or abetting hostilities against any of the said powers, or by carrying to any of them those articles which are deemed contraband by the modern usage of nations, will not receive the protection of the United States against such punishment or forfeiture; and further that I have given instructions to those officers to whom it belongs, to cause prosecutions to be instituted against all persons, who shall, within the cognizance of the Courts of the United States, violate the law of nations, with respect to the powers at war, or any of them.

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, p. 840.

Fifth Annual Message to Congress

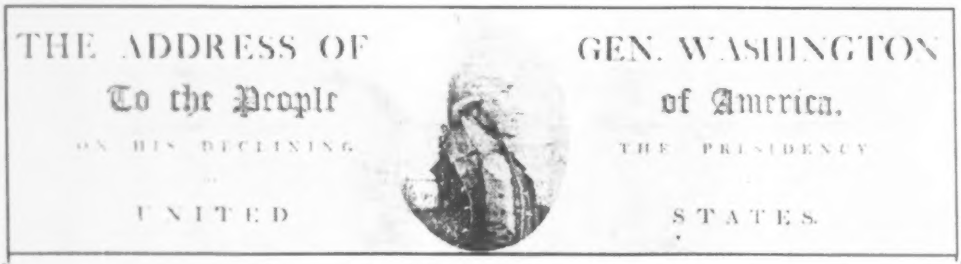
Philadelphia, December 3, 1793.

. . . I cannot recommend to your notice measures for the fulfilment of *our* duties to the rest of the world, without again pressing upon you the necessity of placing ourselves in a condition of compleat defence, and of exacting from *them* the fulfilment of *their* duties towards *us*. The United States ought not to endulge a persuasion, that, contrary to the order of human events, they will for ever keep at a distance those painful appeals to arms, with which the history of every other nation abounds. There is a rank due to the Untied States among Nations, which will be withheld, if not absolutely lost, by the reputation of weakness. If we desire to avoid insult, we must be able to repel it; if we desire to secure peace, one of the most powerful instruments of our rising prosperity, it must be known, that we are at all times ready for War.

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 846–48.

GEORGE WASHINGTON, "THE FAREWELL ADDRESS"

Washington announced his decision to retire at the end of his second term by publishing the Farewell Address in Claypoole's [Philadelphia] *Daily American Advertiser*, September 19, 1796. Many had expected that the first president would stay in office until he died.



THE ADDRESS OF GEN. WASHINGTON
To the People of America,
ON HIS DECLINING THE PRESIDENCY
OF
THE UNITED STATES.

George Washington, *Farewell Address*
Library of Congress

Friends, and Fellow-Citizens: The period for a new election of a Citizen, to Administer the Executive government of the United States, being not far distant, and the time actually arrived, when your thoughts must be employed in designating the person, who is to be cloathed with that important trust, it appears to me proper, especially as it may conduce to a more distinct expression of the public voice, that I should now apprise you of the resolution I have formed, to decline being considered among the number of those, out of whom a choice is to be made. . . .

The Unity of government which constitutes you one people is also now dear to you. It is justly so; for it is a main Pillar in the Edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquility at home; your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very Liberty which you so highly prize. But as it is easy to foresee, that from different causes and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed, to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth; as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly and insidiously) directed, it is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness; . . .

For this you have every inducement of sympathy and interest. Citizens by birth or choice of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections. The name of AMERICAN, which belongs to you in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of Patriotism more than any appellation derived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference, you have the same Religion, Manners, Habits and political Principles. You have in a common cause fought and triumphed together. The independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint councils, and joint efforts; of common dangers, sufferings and successes. . . .

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In contemplating the causes wch. may disturb our Union, it occurs as matter of serious concern, that any ground should have been furnished for characterizing parties by *Geographical* discriminations: *Northern* and *Southern, Atlantic* and *Western,* whence designing men may endeavour to excite a belief that there is a real difference of local interests and views. . . . The Inhabitants of our Western country have lately had a useful lesson on this head. They have seen, in the Negociation by the Executive, and in the unanimous ratification by the Senate, of the Treaty with Spain, and in the universal satisfaction at that event, throughout the United States, a decisive proof how unfounded were the suspicions propagated among them of a policy in the General Government and in the Atlantic States unfriendly to their Interests in regard to the MISSISSIPPI. They have been witnesses to the formation of two Treaties, that with G: Britain and that with Spain, which secure to them every thing they could desire, in respect to our Foreign relations, towards confirming their prosperity. . . .

I have already intimated to you the danger of parties in the state, with particular reference to the founding of them on geographical discriminations. Let me now take a more comprehensive view, and warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party generally. This spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes in all governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or repressed; but in those of the popular form it is seen in its greatest rankness and is truly their worst enemy. . . .

It serves always to distract the public councils and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the community with illfounded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another; foments occasionally riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the government itself through the channels of party passion. Thus the policy and the will of one country are subjected to the policy and will of another . . . .

It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule indeed extends with more or less force to every species of free government. Who that is a sincere friend to it can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric? Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened. . . .

Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me, fellow-citizens) the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government. But that jealousy, to be useful, must be impartial, else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided, instead of a defense against it. Excessive partiality for one foreign nation and excessive dislike of another cause those whom that actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other. Real patriots who may resist the intrigues of the favorite are liable to become suspected and odious, while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people to surrender their interests.

The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little political connections as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.

Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none or very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, he causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves to artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics or the ordinary combinations and consolations of her friendships or enmities.

Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people, under an efficient government, the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.

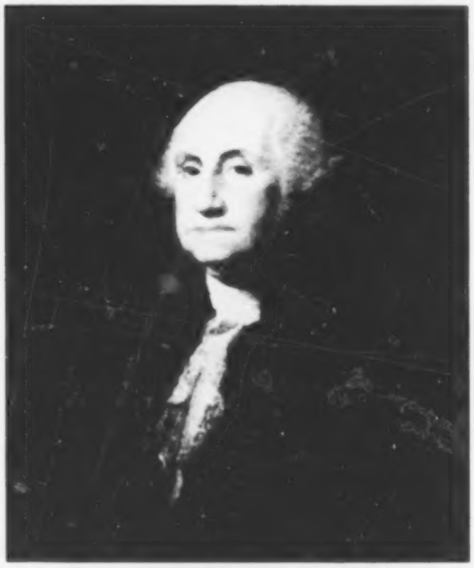
Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalship, interest, humor, or caprice?

Though in reviewing the incidents of my administration I am unconscious of intentional error, I am nevertheless too sensible of my defects not to think it probable that I may have committed many errors. Whatever they may be, I fervently beseech the Almighty to avert or mitigate the evils to which they may tend. I shall also carry with me the hope that my country will never cease to view them with indulgence, and that, after forty-five years of my life dedicated to its service with an upright zeal, the faults of incompetent abilities will be consigned to oblivion, as myself must soon be to the mansions of rest.

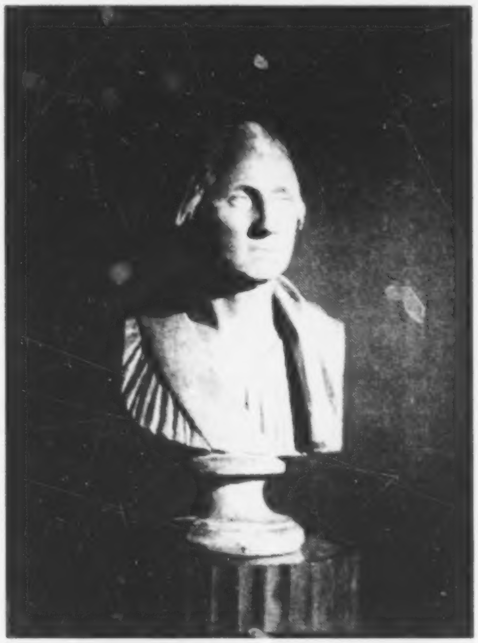
Relying on its kindness in this as in other things, and actuated by that fervent love toward it which is so natural to a man who views in it the native soil for himself and his progenitors for several generations, I anticipate with pleasing expectation that retreat in which I promise myself to realize without ally the sweet enjoyment of partaking in the midst of my fellow citizens the benign influence of good laws under a free government—the ever-favorite object of my heart, and the happy reward, as I trust, of our mutual cares, labors and dangers.

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 962–77.

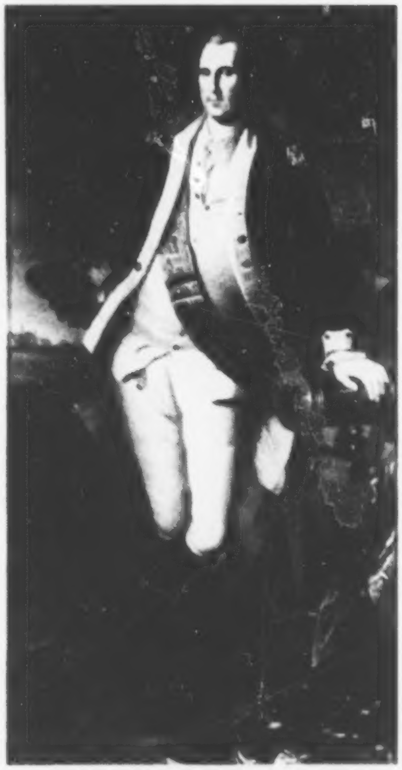
IMAGES OF GEORGE WASHINGTON



George Washington painting
Gilbert Stuart
1797



George Washington sculpture
Jean-Antoine Houdon
1785



George Washington
painting
Charles Willson Peale

LESSON FIVE
GEORGE WASHINGTON AND NATIVE AMERICANS

A. OBJECTIVES

- To draw inferences from documents to determine Washington's views of Native Americans and Native American views of Washington.
- To assess Washington's military policy towards Native Americans during the French and Indian War and the American Revolution.
- To explain Washington's policy as President of the United States towards Indian nations.

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 1748, at the age of 16, Washington joined a surveying expedition charting Thomas, Lord Fairfax's western land holdings. Washington developed a keen interest in the Virginia backcountry, first as a surveyor and later as a property owner and commander of the Virginia Regiment charged with protecting the frontier. The lure of western lands was a driving force in Washington's life. Investment conscious Virginians aspired to amassing large tracts of land in the Ohio Valley, an area claimed by several colonies as well as by the French. Lord Fairfax, Washington's patron, and many of Washington's closest friends, including his half-bother Lawrence, were involved in land speculation in the Ohio Valley. It was during this surveying expedition that Washington first encountered a war party of some 30 Indians. In his journal Washington wrote that they were "coming from war with only one scalp. . . . We had some liquor with us of which we gave them part, it elevating their spirits, put them in the humor of dancing." He continued in his journal describing their dance, more amused by them than fearful.

Washington's opinions of Indians were typical of those shared by most Virginians. He repeated in his journal and diaries the common prejudices of the day about native savagery, treachery, and ignorance. He reserved some of his harshest criticism for native peoples who were allied with the French, often dwelling on their savagery. Washington compared Indians to wolves that must retire to the forests in order to make way for civilization. In references to friendly Indians, Washington was paternalistic and often denigrated them as those who "com when we send for them, . . .go when they are bid, and . . . do whatever is desired of them." H did, however, recognize their skill in frontier fighting and showed a great admiration and respect for Indian warriors who demonstrated their courage in battle.

In 1752 the 21-year-old George Washington, without prior military experience, was appointed Adjutant for the southern region of Virginia. The next year, Washington was commissioned by Governor Dinwiddie to deliver an ultimatum to the French in the Ohio Valley. Washington was to advise the French that the "lands upon the Ohio River" belonged to the colony of Virginia "notoriously known to be the property of Crown of Great Britain." Realizing that the French would not leave the Ohio Valley peaceably, the Virginia governor urged Washington to form alliances with Indian nations for assistance in the event of a war between Britain and France in the region. With limited success Washington won the support of a some Native Americans, although the majority of the native peoples of the Ohio Valley supported the French.

During the American Revolution most of the native peoples saw Americans as more of a threat than the British and were either actively supporting the Loyalists or attempted to remain neutral during the conflict. Initially reluctant to enlist Indians in the Continental Army, Washington, in January 1777, called upon agents friendly to Indian nations to recruit native peoples in the Continental Army. The efforts of these agents met with little success. Throughout the war, Washington attempted to turn tribe against tribe in an attempt to limit the support Indian nations were provided for the British. Once the war ended, many of the Indians who had supported the British continued to resist the encroachments of Americans on their lands. The refusal of the British to surrender forts in the Northwest following the treaty of peace convinced westerners that the British would continue to supply Indians and encourage raids on the frontier.

During Washington's presidency, the administration carried out a policy initiated by the government under the Articles of Confederation of treaty-making with Indians who had supported the British. The Treaty of Hopewell with the Cherokee signed by the Congress in 1785 was essentially reconfirmed by the Treaty of Holston, negotiated by the Washington administration and confirmed in 1793. The administration, likewise, aggressively fought Indians that resisted coming to terms with the nation. After Anthony Wayne's victory at Fallen Timbers in 1794, Washington negotiated the Treaty of Greenville with 12 Indian nations of the region.

In his messages to Congress and through the efforts of his Secretary of War, Henry Knox, Washington argued that it was not in the interest of the United States to wage war with Indian nations claiming that it was cheaper to negotiate than wage war. He likewise argued that a just nation must recognize the rights of Indians. Washington often came into direct conflict with state governments that sanctioned raids into lands designated to Native Americans by treaties with the United States government. Some states, rather than recognize lands confirmed by these treaties, sought to provoke Indians to war as a means of driving them from their boundaries.

Throughout his administration, Washington showed a paternalistic temperament that was characteristic of his first encounters with American Indians in the 1740s. The opinions he formed of Native Americans during his formative years in the Virginia backcountry and encounters with the French in the Ohio Valley were to remain with him throughout his life and helped formulate policy towards Native Americans during his presidency.

C. LESSON ACTIVITIES

1. Read. Divide the class into three groups. Group One should be assigned Student Handout 25 which contains documents pertaining to the French and Indian War. Group Two reads the documents in Student Handout 26 relating to the Revolutionary War. Group Three examines the documents in Student Handout 27 for the Washington administration's policy toward Native Americans.

2. Discuss. Each group should discuss their respective readings.

3. Group Writing. Have each group share their findings with the class through a group newspaper in which students write news articles, editorials, and letters to the editor reflecting differing perspectives. Encourage students to draw political cartoons that illustrate Washington's perception of Indians as well as Native America attitudes towards Washington. Post the newspapers for class review.

D. EXTENDED LESSON IDEAS

1. Research the French and Indian War and evaluate the efforts of the British to enlist support of Native Americans in the war. How successful was George Washington in this effort to win support of Native Americans during the conflict?

2. Investigate the policy of the government under the Articles of Confederation towards Indian nations. Examine the provisions of the Treaties of Fort Stanwix (Six Nations, 1784), Fort McIntosh (Wiandot, Delaware, Chippawa, and Ottawa Nations, 1785), Hopewell (Cherokee, 1785), and the "utmost good faith" clause of the Northwest Ordinance (1787). To what extent did the Washington administration carry out the provisions of these treaties negotiated by the previous government?

3. Examine the provisions of the Treaty of Greenville with Indians of the northwest and the Treaty of Holston with the Cherokee in the southeast. What do the treaties have in common? How did settlers on the frontier regard these treaties? To what extent were the treaties followed?

4. Use the Washington Papers on the Library of Congress Web site (http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/gwhtml/gwhome.html) and search the names of Indian nations (e.g. Cherokee, Creek, Six Nations, etc.). Draw evidence from Washington's correspondence to evaluate his dealings with these nations at different times in his military and political career.

GROUP ONE: POINTS OF VIEW DURING THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR

A Seneca Chief's view of George Washington

In 1753 Virginia's governor, Robert Dinwiddie, commissioned George Washington to deliver a message to the French commander in the Ohio Valley ordering them to abandon their forts and withdraw to Canada. Dinwiddie instructed Washington to enlist the aid of Indians during this mission. Tanacharison, a Seneca chief, known to the English as Half-King, was Washington's most important ally. Tanacharison is reported to have made the following statement about Washington after being defeated by the French at Fort Necessity (Great Meadows).

The Colonel is a good-natured man, but has no experience . . . he by no means takes advice from . . . [us]; he . . . made no fortifications at all but that little thing upon the meadow, where he thought the French would come up to him in open field. . . the French acted as cowards and the English as fools. . . .

Source: Lee Miller, ed., *From the Heart: Voices of the American Indian* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), p. 88.

An Onondaga's View of the Rivalry between France and England

Canassatego, an Onondaga chief, discusses the European rivalry in North America, ca. 1754.

. . . [W]e told them . . . that we looked upon this War as a War between the English and French only, and did not intend to engage on either side; for that the French and English made War and Peace at Pleasure, but when the Indians once engaged in Wars they knew not when it would end. We also told the French that they knew, and all the World knew, the Countries on which we were Settled, and particularly the Lakes were ours, and therefore if they would fight . . . the English, they ought to fight on the Salt Water. . . .

Source: Lee Miller ed., *From the Heart: Voices of the American Indian* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), p. 89.

George Washington to Robert Dinwiddie

In his letter to the Virginia Governor, Washington explains that the English inhabitants of the western regions of Pennsylvania are at the mercy of France's Indian allies.

Winchester, April 7, 1756.

Honble. Sir;

I arrived here yesterday, and think it advisable. . . to inform you of the unhappy situation of affairs on this quarter. The enemy have returned in greater numbers, committed several murders not far from Winchester, and even are so daring as to attack our forts in open day. . . . Many of the inhabitants are in a miserable situation by their losses, and so apprehensive of danger, that, I believe, unless a stop is put to the depredations of the Indians, the Blue Ridge will soon become our frontier.

. . . I shall . . . scour the woods and suspected places, in all the mountains, valleys, &c. on this part of our frontiers; and doubt not but I shall fall in with the Indians and their more cruel associates! . . . However absurd it may appear, it is nevertheless certain, that five hundred Indians have it more in their power to annoy the inhabitants, than ten times their number of regulars. For besides the advantageous way they have of fighting in the woods, their cunning and craft are not to be equalled, neither their activity and indefatigable sufferings. They prowl about like wolves, and, like them, do their mischief by stealth. They depend upon their dexterity in hunting and upon the cattle of the inhabitants for provisions. . . .

Source: George Washington Papers, Library of Congress

Document 5.4
Washington's Speech to Catawba Indians

Washington enlisted the Catawbas, staunch British allies during the French and Indian War, to intercede with the Cherokee to fight against the French.

October 28, 1756

CAPT. JOHNNE,

We Desire you to go to the Cherokees, and tell them the Road is now clear and Open; We expected them to War last Spring, and love them So well, that Our Governor Sent Some few men to build a fort among them; but we are mighty Sorry that they hearken so much to lies French tell, as to break their promise and not come to war, when they might have got a great deal of honour; and killd a great many of the French, whose hearts are false, and rotten as an old Stump—If they Continue to Listen to what the French Say much longer they will have great cause to be sorry, as the French have no Match locks, powd and Lead but what they got from King George our father, before the War began and that will soon be out; when they will get no more, and all the French Indians will be starving with Cold, and must take to Bows and Arrows again for want of Ammunition. . . .

Let them get their knives and tomhawkes Sharpe, we will go before them, and show them the way to honour, Scalps, prisoners, and money Enough, We are mighty sorry they stay at home idle, when they should go to War, and become great men, and a terror & dread to their Enemies. . . .

Source: George Washington Papers, Library of Congress

Washington to Henry Bouquet

Colonel Henry Bouquet wrote to Washington on July 14, 1758, of his opposition to the use of Indians in the campaign against the French. In his letter to Washington Bouquet wrote "It is a great humiliation for us to be obliged to suffer the repeated insolence of such rascals. I think it would be easier to make Indians of our white men, than to cox [coax] that damned tanny [tawny] race." Two days later, Washington wrote this reply.

Camp at Fort Cumberland, July 16, 1758.

Sir:

. . . I always send out some white people with the Indians, and will today or tomorrow, send an Officer and some alert white men, with another Party of Cherokees as you desire it; tho' I must confess, that I think these Scalping Parties of Indians we send out, will more effectually harass the Enemy (by keeping them under continual Alarms) than any Parties of white People can do; because small parties of ours are not equal to the undertaking, (not being so dexterous at skulking as Indians;) and large ones will be discover'd by their spies early enough to give the Enemy time to repell them by a superior Force; and at all events, there is a great probability of loosing many of our best men, and fatiguing others before the most essential Services are enter'd upon and am afraid not answer the propos'd end. . . .

The malbehaviour of the Indians with you, gives me great concern; if they were hearty in our Interest their Services wou'd be infinitely valuable, as I cannot conceive the best white Men to be equal to them in the Woods; but I fear they are too sensible of their high Importance to us, to render us any very acceptable Service. . . .

Source: George Washington Papers, Library of Congress

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Washington to William Crawford

In 1767 Washington instructed a friend, William Crawford, to file a claim on his behalf to land in western Pennsylvania, a region that was reserved for Indians by the Proclamation of 1763. Washington was aware of the royal decree but, nonetheless, instructed Crawford to secure his claim to 2,000 acres of "good rich land" along the Ohio River.

Sept. 21, 1767.

. . . Could such a piece of land as this be found, you would do me a singular favor in falling upon some method to secure it immediately from the attempts of any other, as nothing is more certain that the lands cannot remain long ungranted, when once it is known that rights are to be had for them. . . .

The other matter, just now hinted at and which I proposed in my last to join you, in attempting to secure some of the most valuable lands in the King's part, which I think may be accomplished after a while, notwithstanding the proclamation that restrains it at present, and prohibits the settling of them at all; for I can never look upon that proclamation in any other light (but this I say between ourselves), than as a temporary expedient to quiet the minds of the Indians, and must fall, of course, in a few years, especially when those Indians are consenting to our occupying the lands. Any person, therefore, who neglects the present opportunity of hunting out good lands, and in some measure marking and distinguishing them for his own (in order to keep others from settling them), will never regain it. . . . For my own part, I should have no objection to a grant of land upon the Ohio, a good way below Pittsburg, but would willingly secure some good tracts nearer hand first.

Source: Worthington C. Ford, ed, *The Writings of George Washington,* Vol. II (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1889), pp. 218–24.

GROUP TWO: POINTS OF VIEW DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR AND ITS IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH

Chief Logan's Speech, 1774

In 1774, on the eve of the American Revolution, a series of bloody encounters occurred between white settlers and Native Americans in the Ohio Valley. White settlers accused Indians of stealing their stock, and Colonel Cresap launched an attack on all native peoples of the area including the family of Chief Tahgahjute (Logan). Tahgahjute had remained neutral during the French and Indian War and had the reputation of being a friend of the whites. Agonizing over the loss of members of his family, Tahgahjute joined the war. Defeated, he refused to join with other chiefs who personally petitioned for peace. According to Thomas Jefferson in his *Notes on Virginia,* Tahgahjute sent the following speech to be delivered to Lord Dunmore.

I appeal to any white man to say, if ever he entered Logan's cabin hungry, and he gave him not meat: if ever he came cold and naked, and he clothed him not. During the course of the last long and bloody war Logan remained idle in his cabin, an advocate for peace. Such was my love for the whites, that my countrymen pointed as they passed, and said, "Logan is the friend of white man." I had even thought to have lived with you, but for the injuries of one man. Colonel Cresap, the last spring, in cold blood, and unprovoked, murdered all the relations of Logan, not even sparing my women and children. There runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature. This called on me for revenge. I have sought it: I have killed many: I have fully gutted my vengeance: for my country I rejoice at the beams of peace. But do not harbour a thought that mine is the joy of fear. Logan never felt fear. He will not turn on his heel to save his life. Who is there to mourn for Logan?—Not one.

Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), pp. 63–64.

A Delaware Chief's View of the American Revolution

Both the British and Americans tried to win the support of the Six Nations and their allies in New York, Pennsylvania, and the Ohio Valley. Reflecting on the outbreak of the American Revolution, a Delaware chief remarked:

The father [George III] has called on his Indian children, to assist him in punishing his children, the Americans. . . . At first I looked upon it as a family quarrel, in which I was not interested. However at length it appeared to me, that the father was in the right; and his children deserved to be punished a little. That this must be the case I concluded from the many cruel acts his offspring had committed from time to time on his Indian children. . . .

Source: George Washington Papers, Library of Congress

Washington to Nathaniel Gist

Dragging Canoe, a Cherokee warrior, had launched a series of raids against settlers in eastern Tennessee in July 1776. Virginia and the Carolinas sent their state militia against the Cherokee. Thomas Jefferson expressed his support to the action of the state governments stating: "Our contest with Britain is too serious, and too great to permit any possibility of [danger] . . . from the Indians. This then is the reason for driving them off." Despite conflicts with the Cherokee, Washington advised his military commanders to see their services as combat troops. He directed Nathaniel Gist in early 1777 to recruit Cherokees in the service of the United States.

Morris Town, January 14, 1777.

Sir:

By virtue of the powers to me given by the Honble. Continental Congress, I do hereby Authorize you . . . to proceed immediately to the Cherokee, or any other Nation of Indians in which you may have an Influence, and there use your utmost endeavours to procure a Number of Warriors (not exceeding in the whole 500) to join the Army under my immediate Command.

They are to come provided with Arms, Blankets &ca. but shall be supplied with Ammunition and Provisions, they shall receive in lieu of presents, the same pay as the Troops in Continental Service do, and if they have Officers of their own people, you may engage such advanced pay, provided it bears a similarity to the difference in ours, but not greater.

Wishing success to your undertaking and a speedy return. I am, etc.

N. B. This body of Indians (if obtaind) are to consider you as their head, and are to be Informed that they are to obey all such orders as you shall receive from me, and deliver to them.

Source: George Washington Papers, Library of Congress

Washington to John Sullivan

Washington, ever mindful of the importance of subduing Britain's Indian allies, ordered numerous campaigns to subdue Indians on the frontier. Washington's instructions to General John Sullivan (below) were carried out in his campaign of September 1779 in which his forces destroyed 40 Indian villages and immeasurable quantities corn, other vegetables, and fruit.

Head Quarters, Middle Brook, May 31, 1779.

Sir:

The expedition you are appointed to command is to be directed against the hostile tribes of the six nations of Indians, with their associates and adherents. The immediate objects are the total distruction and devastation of their settlements and the capture of as many prisoners of every age and sex as possible. . . .

I would recommd that some post in the center of the Indian Country should be occupied with all expedition, with a sufficient quantity of provision; whence parties should be detached to lay waste all the settlements around, with instructions to do it in the most effectual manner; that the country may not be merely overrun but destroyed. . . .

. . . [Y]ou will not by any means, listen to any overture of peace before the total ruin of their settlements is effected. It is likely enough their fears if they are unable to oppose us, will compel them to offers of peace, or policy may lead them to endeavour to amuse us in this way to gain time and succour for more effectual opposition. Our future security will be in their inability to injure us; [the distance to wch. they are driven] and in the terror with which the severity of the chastizement they receive will inspire them. Peace without this would be fallacious and temporary. New presents and an addition of force from the enemy, would engage them to break it the first fair opportunity, and all the expence of our extensive preparations, would be lost.

When we have effectually chastized them we may then listen to peace and endeavour to draw further advantages from their fears. But even in this case great caution will be necessary to guard against the snares which their treachery may hold out. They must be explicit in their promises give substantial pledges for their performance and execute their engagements with decision and dispatch. Hostages are the only kind of security to be depended on. . . .

Source: George Washington Papers, Library of Congress

Washington to James Duane

James Duane served as the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Northern District operating out of Albany, New York. In his letter to Duane, Washington outlined an Indian policy that was adopted by the Continental Congress.

Rocky Hill, September 7, 1783.

Sir:

I have carefully perused the Papers which you put into my hands relative to Indian Affairs.

. . . That the Indians should be informed, that after a Contest of eight years for the Sovereignty of this Country G: Britain has ceded all the Lands of the United States within the limits discribed by the arte. of the Provisional Treaty.

That as they (the Indians) maugre all the advice and admonition which could be given them at the commencemt; and during the prosecution of the War could not be restrained from acts of Hostility, but were determined to join their Arms to those of G Britain and to share their fortune; so, consequently, with a less generous People than Americans they would be made to share the same fate; and be compelld to retire along with them beyond the Lakes. But as we prefer Peace to a state of Warfare, as we consider them as a deluded People; as we perswade ourselves that they are convinced, from experience, of their error in taking up the Hatchet against us, and that their true Interest and safety must now depend upon our friendship. As the Country, is large enough to contain us all; and as we are disposed to be kind to them and to partake of their Trade, we will from these considerations and from motives of Compn. [compassion], draw a veil over what is past and establish a boundary line between them and us beyond which we will endeavor to restrain our People from Hunting or Settling, and within which they shall not come, but for the purposes of Trading, Treating, or other business unexceptionable in its nature.

. . . I am clear in my opinion, that policy and economy point very strongly to the expediency of being upon good terms with the Indians, and the propriety of purchasing their Lands in preference to attempting to drive them by force of arms out of their Country; which as we have already experienced is like driving the Wild Beasts of the Forest which will return us soon as the pursuit is at an end and fall perhaps on those that are left there; when the gradual extension of our Settlements will as certainly cause the Savage as the Wolf to retire; both being beasts of prey tho' they differ in shape. In a word there is nothing to be obtained by an Indian War but the Soil they live on and this can be had by purchase at less expence, and without that bloodshed, and those distresses which helpless Women and Children are made partakers of in all kinds of disputes with them. . . .

Source: George Washington Papers, Library of Congress

Seneca Reaction to the Sullivan Campaign and the Treaty of Fort Stanwix

Cornplanter (1732–1836), a Seneca chief reflects on the Sullivan campaign during the American Revolution and the Second Treaty of Fort Stanwix (1784). By the treaty the Iroquois relinquished their claims to territory in western New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio as a condition for peace with the United States.

Father: The voice of the Seneca nation speaks to you. . . . When your army entered the country of the Six Nations, we called you [Washington] the Town Destroyer, and to this day, when that name is heard, our women look behind them and turn pale and our children cling to the necks of their mothers. . . .

When our chiefs returned from the treaty at Fort Stanwix, and laid before our council what had been done there, our nation was surprised to hear how great a country you had compelled them to give up to you, without your paying to us any thing for it. Every one said that your hearts were yet swelled with resentment against us. . . . We asked each other, "What have we done to deserve such severe chastisement? . . . You then told us that we were in your hand, and that by closing it you could crush us to nothing, and you demanded from us a great country, as the price of that peace which you had offered us; as if our want of strength had destroyed our rights.

. . . [A] man of the name of Phelps has come among us and claimed our whole country northward of the line of Pennsylvania . . . that it did not belong to use, for the great king had ceded the whole of it, when you made peace with him. . . . He demanded it; he insisted on his demand, and declared that he would have it all. It was impossible for us to grant him this, and we immediately refused it. . . . He then threatened us with immediate war, if we did not comply. Upon this threat, our chiefs held a council, and they agreed that no event of war could be worse than to be driven, with our wives and children, from the only country which we had any right to, and, therefore, weak as our nation was, they determined to take the chance of war, rather than submit to such unjust demands, which seemed to have no bounds. . . .

Before you determine on a measure so unjust, look up to God, who has made us as well as you. We hope He will not permit you to destroy the whole of our nation. . . . The land we live on, our fathers received from God, and they transmitted it to us, for our children, and we cannot part with it.

Edward Cornplanter

Source: Lee Miller ed., *From the Heart: Voices of the American Indian* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), pp. 105–106.

Corn Tassel on Treaty Negotiation, July 1785

After the American Revolution the United States sent a delegation to sign a peace treaty with the Cherokee nation that had sided with the British during the war. Corn Tassel, an elder Cherokee statesman, expressed the sentiments of his people.

It is a little surprising that when we entered into treaties with our brothers, the whites, their whole cry is more land! . . . But on the principles of fairness, of which we have received assurances during the conducting of the present treaty, and in the name of free will and equality, I must reject your demand.

Suppose, in considering the nature of your claim, I were to ask one of you . . . under what kind of authority, by what law, or on what pretense he makes this exorbitant demand of nearly all the lands we hold between your settlements and our towns, as the cement and consideration of our peace.

Would he tell me that it is by right of conquest? No! If he did, I should retort on him that we had last marched over his territory; even up to this very place which he has fortified so far within his former limits . . . .

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If, therefore, a bare march . . . is sufficient reason to ground a claim to it, we shall insist upon transposing the demand, and your relinquishing your settlements on the western waters and removing one hundred miles back towards the east, whither some of our warriors advanced against you . . . .

Again, were we to inquire by what law or authority you set up a claim, I answer, none! Your laws extend not into our country, nor ever did. You talk of the law of nature and the law of nations, and they are both against you.

Indeed, much has been advanced on the want of what you term civilization among the Indians; and many proposals have been made to us to adopt your laws, your religion, your manners and your customs. But, we confess that we do not yet see the . . . practicability of such a reformation, and should be better pleased with beholding the good effect of these doctrines in your own practices than with hearing you talk about them. . . .

The great God of Nature has placed us in different situations. It is true that he has endowed you with many superior advantages; but he has not created us to be your slaves. . . .

Source: Peter Nabokov, *Native American Testimony: A Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from Prophecy to the Present, 1492–1992* (New York: Viking, 1991), pp. 152–55.

GROUP THREE: WASHINGTON'S PRESIDENTIAL POLICY TOWARDS NATIVE AMERICANS

Henry Knox's Report on the Northwest Indians

Henry Knox, Washington's Secretary of War, urged a just and humane policy recognizing Indian rights to the land in his report on the Northwestern Indians. Faced with threats of war in the Northwest, Knox advises restraint.

June 15, 1789

. . . In examining the question how the disturbances on the frontiers are to be quieted, two modes present themselves, by which the object might perhaps be effected; the first of which is by raising an army, and extirpating the refractory tribes entirely, or 2dly by forming treaties of peace with them, in which their rights and limits should be explicitly defined, and the treaties observed on the part of the United States with the most rigid justice, by punishing the whites, who should violate the same.

In considering the first mode, an inquiry would arise, whether, under the existing circumstances of affairs, the United States have a clear right, consistently with the principles of justice and the laws of nature, to proceed to the destruction or expulsion of the savages, on the Wabash, supposing the force for that object easily attainable.

It is presumable, that a nation solicitous of establishing its character on the broad basis of justice, would not only hesitate at, but reject every proposition to benefit itself, by the injury of any neighboring community, however contemptible and weak it might be, either with respect to its manner or power. . . .

The Indians being the prior occupants, posses the right of the soil. It cannot be taken from them unless by their free consent, or by the right of conquest in case of a just war. To dispossess them on any other principle, would be a gross violation of the fundamental laws of nature, and of the distributive justice which is the glory of a nation. . . .

The time has arrived, when it is highly expedient that a liberal system of justice should be adopted for the various Indian tribes within the limits of the United States. . . .

Source: American State Papers: Indian Affairs.

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Second Annual Message to Congress

Washington in his message to Congress warms of possible retaliation against the Miami and Shawnee of the Old Northwest. Washington sent an expedition into the region in 1791 under the command of General Arthur St. Clair who suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the Indians. In 1794 Washington sent General Anthony Wayne into the region and defeated the Indians at the Battle of Fallen Timbers.

December 8, 1790

. . . It has been heretofore known to Congress, that frequent incursions have been made on our frontier settlements by certain banditti of Indians from the North West side of the Ohio. These with some of the tribes dwelling on and near the Wabash have of late been particularly active in their depredations; and being emboldened by the impunity of their crimes, and aided by such parts of the neighboring tribes as could be seduced to join in their hostilities or afford them a retreat for their prisoners and plunder, they have, instead of listening to the humane overtures made on the part of the United States, renewed their violences with fresh alacrity and greater effect. The lives of a number of valuable Citizens have thus been sacrificed, and some of them under circumstances peculiarly shocking; whilst others have been carried into a deplorable captivity.

These aggravated provcations rendered it essential to the safety of the Western Settlements that the aggressors should be made sensible that the Government of the Union is not less capable of punishing their crimes, than it is disposed to respect their rights and reward their attachments. . . .

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 769–70.

Fourth Annual Message to Congress, November 6, 1792

Despite the continuing conflict with Indians in the Old Northwest, Washington in his fourth message to Congress, discusses the need to restrain settlers who are encroaching on Indian lands.

. . . I cannot dismiss the subject of Indian affairs without again recommending to your consideration the expediency of more adequate provision for giving energy to the laws throughout our interior frontier, and for restraining the commission of outrages upon the Indians; without which all pacific plans must prove nugatory. To enable, by competent rewards, the employment of qualified and trusty persons to reside among them, as agents, would also contribute to the preservation of peace and good neighbourhood. If, in addition to these expedients, an eligible plan could be devised for promoting civilization among the friendly tribes, and for carrying on trade with them, upon a scale equal to their wants, and under regulations calculated to protect them from imposition and extortion, its influence in cementing their interests with our's could not but be considerable. . . .

Source: George Washington Papers, Library of Congress

Sixth Annual Message to Congress, November 19, 1794

General Anthony Wayne defeated the Shawnee and Miami at the Battle of Fallen Timbers on August 20, 1794. In his sixth message to Congress, Washington reflects on Wayne campaign and discusses peace overtures to all Indians within the United States.

. . . The intelligence from the army, under the command of general Wayne, is a happy presage to our military operations against the hostile Indians north of the Ohio. From the advices which have been forwarded, the advance which he has made must have damped the ardor of the savages, and weakened their obstinacy in waging war against the United States. And yet, even at this late hour, when our power to punish them cannot be questioned, we shall not be unwilling to cement a lasting peace, upon terms of candor, equity, and good neighborhood.

Towards none of the Indian tribes have overtures of friendship been spared. The Creeks in particular are covered from encroachment by the interposition of the General Government and that of Georgia. From a desire also to remove the discontents of the Six Nations . . . an agent is now endeavoring to rectify any misconception, into which they may have fallen. But I cannot refrain from again pressing upon your deliberations, the plan which I recommended at the last session, for the improvement of harmony with all the Indians within our limits. . . .

Source: George Washington Papers, Library of Congress

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Speech of Little Turtle, July 29, 1795

The Miami chief Little Turtle was one of the signers of the Treaty of Greenville (August 3, 1795) following General Anthony Wayne's victory over the Indians at the Battle of Fallen Timbers (August 20, 1794). By the terms of the treaty the Indians ceded the greater part of the present state of Ohio and the post of Detroit and its surroundings. In a speech during the treaty deliberations, Little Turtle complained about the forfeiture of land. His speech became part of the report President Washington sent to Congress in December, 1795.

Elder Brother, and all you present: I am going to say a few words, in the name of the Pottawatamies, Weas and Kickapoos. It is well known to you all, that people are appointed on those occasions, to speak the sentiments of others; therefore am I appointed for those three nations.

. . . Elder Brother: We wish you to listen with attention to our words. You have told your younger brothers that the British imposed falsehoods on us when they said that the United States wished to take our lands from us, and that the United States had no such designs. You pointed out to us the boundary line . . . .

Elder Brother: You have told us to speak our minds freely, and we now do it. This line takes in the greater and best part of your brothers' hunting ground. Therefore, your younger brothers are of opinion you take too much of their lands away and confine the hunting of our young men within the limits too contracted. . . .

Source: W. C. Vanderwerth, *Indian Oratory: Famous Speeches by Noted Indian Chieftains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), pp. 56–57.

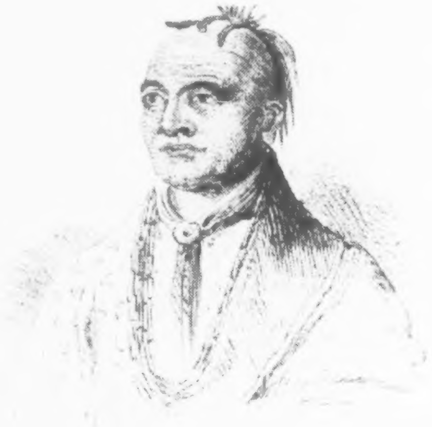
Joseph Brant on Treaty Concessions, April 21, 1794

Joseph Brant, a Mohawk, speaking to a council in the Onondaga village described how the patience of the Six Nations is exhausted at the failure of Congress to act on their petitions.

Brothers: You, of the United States, listen to what we are going to say to you. . . .

Brother: At the first treaty, after the conclusion of the war between you and Great Britain, at Fort Stanwix, your commissioners conducted the business as it to them seemed best; they pointed out a lien of division, and then confirmed it; after this, they held out that our country was ceded to them by the King; this confused the chiefs who attended there, and prevented them from making any reply to the contrary; still holding out, it we did not consent to it, their warriors were at their back, and that we would get no further protection from Great Britain. This has ever been held out to us, by the commissioners from Congress; at all the treaties held with us since the peace. . . .

Brother: You must recollect the number of chiefs who have, at divers times, waited on Congress; they have pointed out the means to be taken . . . ; that was, if you would withdraw your claim to the boundary line, and lands within the line, as offered by us; had this been done, peace would have taken place; and, unless this still be done, we see no other method of accomplishing it.



Mohawk Chief, Joseph Brant
The American Revolution: A Picture Sourcebook,
Dover Publications, 1975

Brother: We have borne everything patiently for this long time past; we have done everything we could consistently do with the welfare of our nations in general--notwithstanding the many advantages that have been taken of us, by individuals making purchases from us, the Six Nations, whose fraudulent conduct towards us Congress never has taken notice of, nor in any wise seen us rectified, nor made our minds easy. This is the case to the present day; our patience is not entirely worn out. . . .

Brother: We are of the same opinion with the people of the United States; you consider yourselves as independent people; we, as the original inhabitants of this country, and sovereigns of the soil, look upon ourselves as equally independent, and free as any other nation or nations. This country was given to us by the Great Spirit above; we wish to enjoy it. . . .

Brother: The great exertions we have made, for this number of years, to accomplish a peace, and have not been able to obtain it; our patience, as we have already observed, is exhausted, and we are discouraged form persevering any longer. We, therefore, throw ourselves under the protection of the Great Spirit above, who, we hope, will order all things for the best. We have told you our patience is worn out; but not so far, but that we wish for peace, and, whenever we hear that pleasing sound, we shall pay attention to it.

Source: W. C. Vanderwerth, *Indian Oratory: Famous Speeches by Noted Indian Chieftains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), pp. 50–53.

LESSON 6
GEORGE WASHINGTON AND SLAVERY

A. OBJECTIVES

- To examine Washington's views on chattel slavery by drawing inferences from his early writings.
- To evaluate Washington's position on slavery in the context of eighteenth-century American beliefs and values.
- To lcompare Washington's view of slavery during the post-Revolutionary War period with his earlier views.

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

To study George Washington's attitudes toward slavery requires an examination of the life of a person born into the landed gentry of colonial Virginia. From his birth in 1732, through his early life on several plantations along the Potomac and Rappahanock rivers, he was raised among an aristocracy that condoned slavery. On his father's death in 1743, the eleven-year-old Washington inherited ten slaves. In 1752, he inherited additional slaves on the death of his half-brother, Lawrence. His holdings were substantially increased when he married Martha Dandridge Custis in 1759. Although these slaves, whom Washington referred to as "Dower Negroes," belonged to the Custis estate, he assumed responsibility for them. Washington followed the conventions of other Virginia planters; he purchased slaves and offered rewards for the return of runaway slaves. Only occasional voices were raised against slaveholding in Washington's Virginia.

While serving as Commander of the Continental Army, Washington entrusted the management of Mount Vernon to his cousin Lund Washington. In a letter to Lund Washington dated 1779 he expressed a concern about the break-up of families if slaves had to be sold in order to obtain needed funds for the running of the estate: ". . . if these poor wretches are to be held in a state of slavery, I do not see that a change of masters will render it more irksome, provided husband and wife, and Parents and children are not separated from each other, which is not my intention to do. . . ."

Sometime between 1788 and 1789, Washington wrote a telling statement regarding his reflections as a slave owner. "The unfortunate condition of the persons, whose labour in part I employed, has been the only unavoidable subject of regret. To make the Adults among them as easy & as comfortable in their circumstances as their actual state of ignorance & improvidence would admit; & to lay a foundation to prepare the rising generation for a destiny different from that in which they were born; afforded some satisfaction to my mind, & could not I hoped be displeasing to the justice of the Creator."

Some historians have argued that Washington began to examine his views on slavery as early as the Revolutionary War. He encountered different perspectives as his military campaigns took him to various regions within the nation. Certainly Washington developed a deep regard for free blacks and slaves who served gallantly in the military during the war. The close friendship that developed between Washington and a young French officer, the Marquis de Lafayette, who abhorred slavery, certainly made an impression on Washington, and may have influenced his decision to lease his Mount Vernon farms to tenants as a means of terminating his holding of humans in bondage. Although the scheme failed, Washington resolved to free his slaves upon his death.

C. LESSON ACTIVITIES

1. Begin the lesson by examining the illustration of a slave ship as depicted in Thomas Clarkson's *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishments of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade* by the British Parliament (Student Handout 28). After discussing the horrific ordeal of the Middle Passage, remind students that virtually all Virginia planters felt that slavery was necessary to maintain their economic security. Have students read Student Handout 29, "Reward for Runaway Slaves" and explain that two of the runaways had been purchased from a slave ship in 1759.

2. Divide the class into groups and assign each the readings designated for their group (Student Handouts 30–34). After each selection there are several questions that may be used to guide the discussion within the group. Have each group report to the class on the conclusions that they inferred from the reading(s). As a class, discuss Washington's perspective on chattel slavery. Examine each of Washington's correspondences for the date it was written and its intended audience. To whom were these documents written? Are there any similarities in the content of the documents? How do these documents differ? What factors may have accounted for the lack of any public pronouncement on slavery?

3. Have all students read the excerpted section from Washington's last will and testament dealing with the emancipation of slaves (Student Handout 35). Discuss the provisions of Washington's will regarding freedom for his slaves in connection with the previous readings.

4. Conclude with an evaluative essay on Washington's position on slavery. What conclusions can you draw from Washington's writings on the subject?

V. EXTENDED LESSON IDEAS

1. Extend the lesson by having students examine the debates at the Federal Convention. Research the discussion regarding slavery especially noting the debates of August 8, 21–22, 28–29, 1787 (see Max Farrand, *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, vol. 2). You may also have students examine the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery address Benjamin Franklin presented to the Convention, July 2, 1787 (see *Supplement to Max Farrand's The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, edited by James H. Hutson).

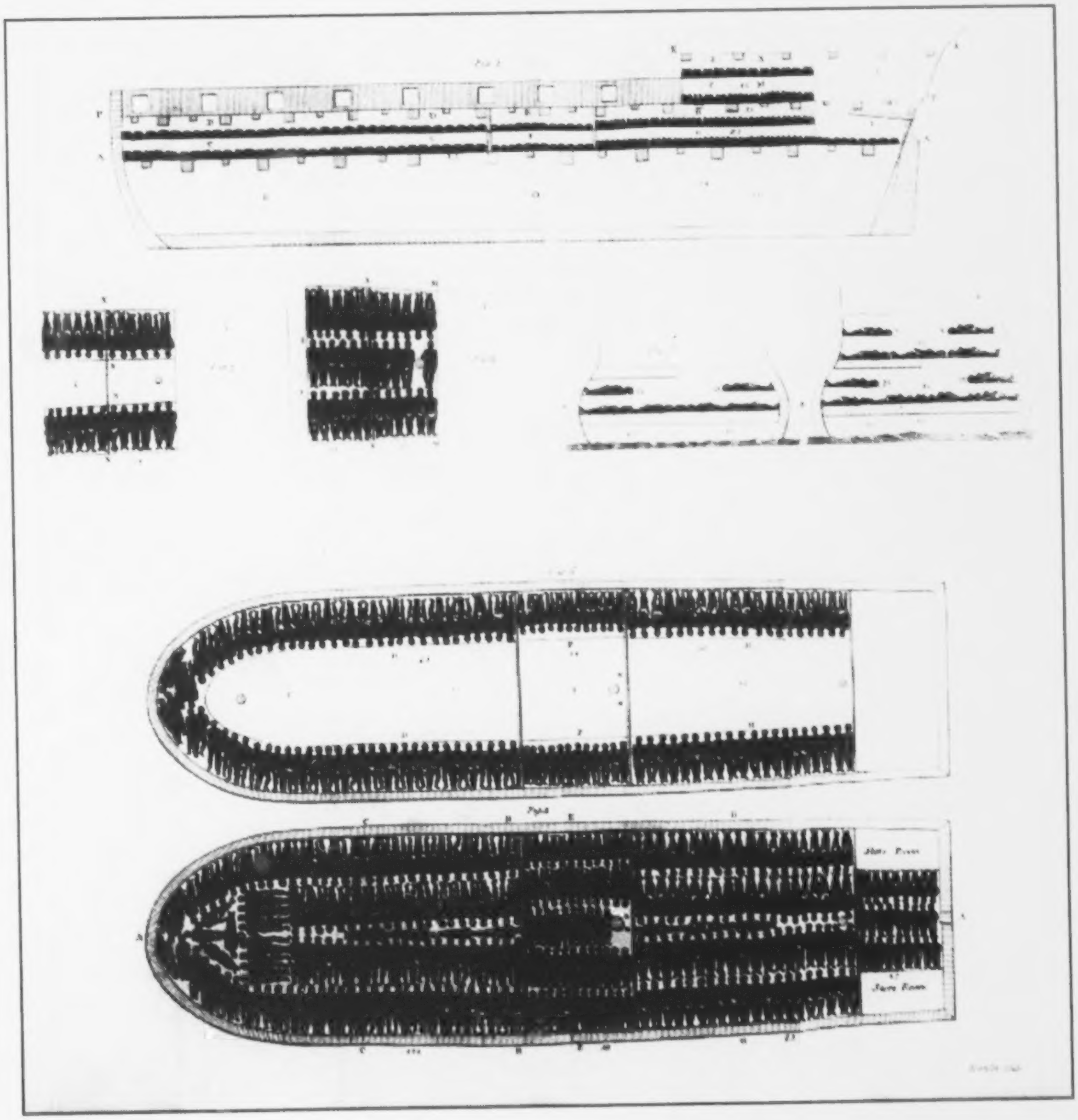
2. Research the views of Thomas Jefferson and George Mason, two noted Virginia planters, regarding the slavery issue. To what extent were their attitudes toward the institution of slavery similar to or different from those of George Washington? What was Jefferson's position on emancipation? What did he write about the institution of slavery in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*? What arguments did George Mason present at the Federal Convention regarding slavery and the slave trade? Did either of these prominent Virginians free their slaves? How would you compare their rhetoric and actions to those of George Washington?

3. James Thomas Flexner in his biography of Washington devoted a short section to Washington and slavery. In defense of Washington, Flexner wrote:

> . . . The Revolution won, Washington hoped that the American experiment would reveal to the world that kings and aristocracies were unnecessary, that populations were capable of ruling themselves. This required national unity, and no issue was more divisive than slavery. Putting first what he considered the more comprehensive battle for freedom, Washington limited himself to stating that, if an authentic movement towards emancipation could be started in Virginia, he would come to its support. Had Washington been more audacious, he would undoubtedly have failed to achieve the end of slavery, and he would certainly have made impossible the role he played in the Constitutional Convention and the presidency. . . .

Write a response either supporting or rejecting Flexner's assertion. Use historical evidence to support your argument.

SLAVE SHIP



Source: The Huntington Library.

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REWARD FOR RUNAWAY SLAVES

Fairfax County August 11, 1761

Ran away from a Plantation of the Subscriber's, on *Dogue Run* in *Fairfax*, on Sunday the 9th Instant, the following Negroes, *viz.*

Peros, 35 or 40 Years of Age, a well-set Fellow, of about 5 Feet 8 Inches high . . .

Jack, 30 Years (or thereabouts) old, a slim, black, well made Fellow, of near 6 Feet . . .

Neptune, aged 25 or 30, well set, and about 5 Feet 8 or 9 Inches high . . .

Cupid, 23 or 25 Years old, a black well made Fellow, 5 Feet 8 or 9 Inches high . . .

The two last of these Negroes were bought from an *African* ship in *August* 1759, and talk very broken and unintelligible *English*. . . .

As they went off without the least Suspicion, Provocation, or Difference with any Body, or the least any Word or Abuse from their Overseers, tis supposed they will hardly lurk about in the Neighbourhood, but steer some direct Course (which cannot even be guessed at) in Hopes of an Escape. . . .

Whoever apprehends the said Negroes, so that the Subscriber may readily get them, shall have, if taken up in this County, Forty Shillings Reward, beside what the law allows; and if at any greater Distance, or out of the Colony, a proportionable Recompence paid them, by

GEORGE WASHINGTON

N.B. If they should be taken separately, the Reward will be proportioned.

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 102–103.

PRIMARY SOURCE READINGS
Group One

Washington's Letter to Josiah Thompson

Washington asked Josiah Thompson to arrange for the sale of one of his slaves in the West Indies.

Mount Vernon July 2d 1766.

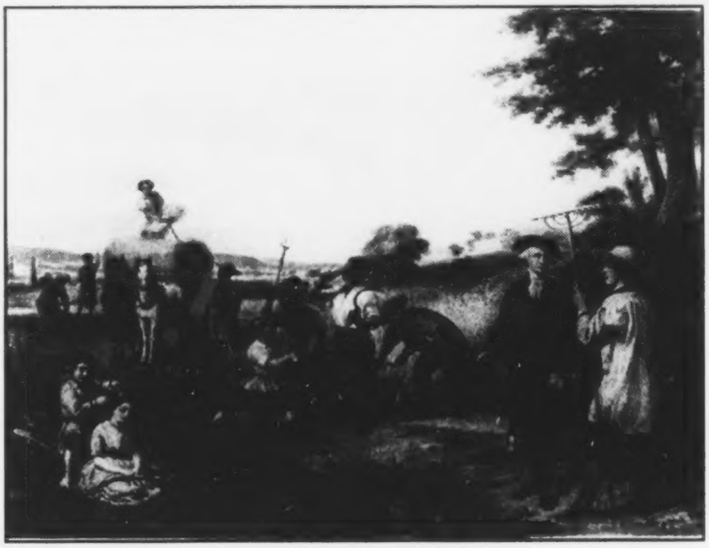
Sir,

With this Letter comes a Negro (Tom) which I beg the favour of you to sell, in any of the Islands you may go to, for whatever he will fetch, & bring me in return for him
One Hhd of best Molasses
One Ditto of best Rum
One Barrl of Lymes—if good & Cheap
One Pot of Tamarinds—contg about 10 lbs. *
Two small Do of mixed Sweetmeats—abt 5 lbs. each
And the residue, much or little, in good old Spirits

That this fellow is both a Rogue and Runaway (tho. he was by no means remarkable for the former, and never practised the latter till of late) I shall not pretend to deny—But that he is exceeding healthy, strong, and good at the Hoe, the whole neighbourhood can testifie. . . .

* tamarind: fruit of a tropical tree, native to India, used in foods, beverages, and medicine.

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, p. 118.



Washington standing among African-American fieldworkers as they harvest hay. Mt. Vernon is visible in the background.

National Archives
Paris: Lemercier imprint of Stearns painting, 1853.

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Washington's Letter to Lund Washington

When Washington left Mount Vernon to assume command of the Continental Army he placed his cousin Lund Washington in charge of his estate.

Middle Brook, February 24, 1779.

Dear Lund:

. . . The advantages resulting from the sale of my negroes, I have very little doubt of; because, as I observed in my last, if we should ultimately prove unsuccessful (of which I am under no apprehension unless it falls on us as a punishment for our want of public, and indeed private virtue) it would be a matter of very little consequence to me, whether my property is in Negroes, or loan office Certificates, as I shall neither ask for, nor expect any favor from his most gracious Majesty, nor any person acting under his authority; the only points therefore for me to consider, are, first, whether it would be most to my interest, in case of a fortunate determination of the present context, to have negroes, and the Crops they will make; or the sum they will now fetch and the interest of the money. And, secondly, the critical moment to make this sale.

With respect to the first point (if a negro man will sell at, or near one thousand pounds, and woman and children in proportion) I have not the smallest doubt on which side the balance, placed in the scale of interest, will preponderate: My scruples arise from a reluctance in offering these people at public vendue [auction], and on account of the uncertainty of timeing the sale well. In the first case, if these poor wretches are to be held in a state of slavery, I do not see that a change of masters will render it more irksome, provided husband and wife, and Parents and children are not separated from each other, which is not my intentions to do. . . .

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 334–36.

Questions for Group One to consider:

1. What can you determine from Washington's 1766 letter to Josiah Thompson?
2. To what extent does the letter to Lund Washington reflect a difference in attitude?
3. What can you gather about Washington's attitude towards slaves and the institution of slavery from these two letters?

PRIMARY SOURCE READINGS
Group Two

Washington's Letter to Henry Laurens

Henry Laurens of South Carolina proposed a scheme to recruit slaves in his home state to fight in the Revolutionary War. Washington responded to General Laurens in a letter dated March 20, 1779. At the time Washington was aware that Rhode Island had enlisted slaves to serve in the military but made no reference of this in his reply to Laurens.

On March 29, 1779 Congress approved Henry Laurens plan to recruit slaves from South Carolina to serve in the Continental Army. South Carolina, angered by the resolution, responded that they would proclaim their neutrality and sit out the remainder of the war.

Middle Brook, March 20, 1779.

Dear Sir:

. . . The policy of our arming Slaves is, in my opinion, a moot point, unless the enemy set the example; for should we begin to form Battalions of them, I have not the smallest doubt (if the War is to be prosecuted) of their [Britain] following us in it,* and justifying the measure upon our own ground; the upshot then must be, who can arm fastest, and where are our Arms? besides, I am not clear that a discrimination will not render Slavery more irksome to those who remain in it; most of the good and evil things of this life are judged of by comparison; and I fear a comparison in this case will be productive of much discontent in those who are held in servitude; but as this is a subject that has never employed much of my thoughts, these are no more than the first crude Ideas that have struck me upon the occasion. . . .

* The Royal Governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore, issued a proclamation on November 7, 1775 that declared *". . . all indentured servants, Negroes, or others, free, that are able or willing to bear arms. . . ."*

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 337–38.

Washington's Letter to John Laurens

Colonel John Laurens, Henry Laurens' son, wrote to Washington on May 19, 1782 of his sense of hopelessness in the project to recruit slaves to serve in the Revolutionary War. Washington responded in July, 1782.

July, 1782

Dear Sir:

. . . I must confess that I am not at all astonished at the failure of your plan. That spirit of freedom which at the commencement of this contest would have gladly sacrificed everything to the attainment of its object, has long since subsided, and every selfish passion has taken its place. It is not the public, but the private interest, which influences the generality of mankind, nor can the Americans any longer boast an exception. Under these circumstances, it would rather have been surprising it you had succeeded nor will you, I fear, have better success in Georgia. . . .

Source: Jared Sparks, ed., *The Writings of George Washington* (Boston, 1834–1837), Vol. 9, pp. 163–64.

Questions for Group Two to consider:

1. What can you determine from these two letters regarding Washington's view on slaves during the Revolutionary War?
2. What is the meaning of Washington's statement to John Laurens: "That spirit of freedom which at the commencement of this contest would have gladly sacrificed everything to the attainment of its object, has long since subsided, and every selfish passion has taken its place."

PRIMARY SOURCE READINGS
Group Three

Washington's Letter to John Francis Mercer

John Mercer owed Washington a debt and offered to pay by transferring slaves in his possession to the Washington estate. Washington in his reply to Mercer rejects the offer and expresses his views regarding the institution of slavery.

Mount Vernon, 9th Sep. 1786.

. . . I never mean (unless some particular circumstances should compel me to it) to possess another slave by purchase; it being among my first wishes to see some plan adopted, by the legislature by which slavery in this Country may be abolished by slow, sure, & imperceptable degrees. . . .

. . . I shall rely upon your promise of two hundred pounds in five weeks from the date of your letter. It will enable me to pay the workmen which have been employed abt this house all the Spring & Summer, (some of whom are here still). But there are two debts, which press hard upon me. One of which, if there is no other resource, I must sell Land or Negroes to discharge. . . .

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, p. 607.

Washington's Letter to James McHenry

William Drayton, traveling from New York to his home in Charleston, South Carolina, spent a few days at Mount Vernon as Washington's guest. Continuing his journey, one of his servants escaped and returned to Mount Vernon. Washington sent Drayton's servant to Baltimore on a pretense of assisting in bringing a jackass, a gift from the King of Spain, and some mules to Mount Vernon. In a letter to James McHenry, Washington requests his assistance in having the slave returned to William Drayton.

Mount Vernon, 11th Nov. 1786.

. . . One of the Servants, who accompany my Overseer, belongs to the Honble William Drayton of Charleston So Ca. This Gentm spent a day or two here on his return from New York, and . . . the above fellow ran away from him and came here. He goes to Baltimore under the impression of assisting in bringing the Jack & Mules home, but the real design of sending him there is to have him shipped to Charleston. . . .

I would beg you . . . to have him shipped, & previously secured. the fellow pretends a willingness to return to his Master, but I think it would be unsafe to trust to this, especially as he has discovered an inclination to get back to Philadelphia (with a view he says of taking passage from thence). . . .

Source: George Washington Papers, The Huntington Library.

Questions for Group Three to consider:

1. What can you discern about Washington's attitude toward slavery from these two letters written just two months apart?
2. Can we get a clear view of Washington's feelings regarding the institution of slavery from these two letters?

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PRIMARY SOURCE READINGS
Group Four

Washington's Letter to Marquis de Lafayette

Washington's letter is a reply to Lafayette's correspondence of February 5, 1783. In his letter, Lafayette, among other topics, discussed a scheme in which he proposed to free slaves in the West Indies and hire them to work Lafayette's estate as free laborers. Lafayette urged that a similar plan be enacted in the United States.

Head Qrs., Newburgh, April 5, 1783.

My dear Marqs.:

. . . The scheme, my dear marqs. which you propose as a precedent, to encourage the emancipation of the black people of this Country from the state of Bondage in wch. they are held, is a striking evidence of the benevolence of your Heart. I shall be happy to join you in so laudable a work; but will defer going into a detail of the business, 'till I have the pleasure of seeing you. . . .

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, p. 510.

Washington's Reflection on Slavery

Sometime between 1788 and 1789, Washington wrote the following reflection on slavery. The statement which follows was not made public.

The unfortunate condition of the persons, whose labour in part I employed, has been the only unavoidable subject of regret. To make the Adults among them as easy & as comfortable in their circumstances as their actual state of ignorance & in providence would admit; & to lay a foundation to prepare the rising generation for a destiny different from that in which they were born; afforded some satisfaction to my mind, & could not I hoped be displeasing to the justice of the Creator.

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, p. 701.

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Washington's Letter to Tobias Lear

In a confidential note to his private secretary, Washington explains a plan to lease his Mount Vernon farms to tenants. He further states:

Philadelphia, 6th May 1794.

I have no scruple to disclose to you, that my motives to these sales . . . are to reduce my income . . . that the remainder of my days may, thereby, be more tranquil and freer from cares; . . . for although, in the estimation of the world I possess a good, and clear estate, yet, so unproductive is it, that I am oftentimes ashamed to refuse aids which I cannot afford unless I was to sell part of it to answer the purpose. (Private) Besides these, I have another motive which makes me earnestly wish for the accomplishment of these things, it is indeed more powerful than all the rest. namely to liberate a certain species of property which I possess, very repugnantly to my own feelings; but which imperious necessity compels; and until I can substitute some other expedient, by which expences not in my power to avoid . . . can be defrayed. . . .

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, p. 868.

Questions for Group Four to consider:

1. What can you discern regarding Washington's attitude toward the institution of slavery from these documents?
2. Why do you suppose that Washington did not make public the note reflecting on slavery? Explain.

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PRIMARY SOURCE READINGS
Group Five

Washington's Letter to Robert Morris

Robert Morris was a prominent Philadelphia businessman and a good friend of George Washington.

Mt Vernon 12th April 1786.

Dr Sir,

I give you the trouble of this letter at the instance of Mr Dalby of Alexandria; who is called to Philadelphia to attend what he conceives to be a vexatious law-suit respecting a slave of his, which a Society of Quakers in the City (formed for such purposes) have attempted to liberate. The merits of this case will no doubt appear upon trial; but from Mr Dalby's state of the matter, it should seem that this Society is not only acting repugnant to justice so far as its conduct concerns strangers, but, in my opinion extremely impolitickly with respect to the state—the City in particular; & without being able (but by Acts of tyranny & oppression) to accomplish their own ends. He says the conduct of this society is not sanctioned by Law: had the case been otherwise, whatever my opinion of the Law might have been, my respect for the policy of the State would on this occasion have appeared in my silence; because against the penalties of promulgated Laws one may guard; but there is no avoiding the snares of individuals, or of private societies—and if the practice of this Society of which Mr Dalby speaks, is not discountenanced, none of those whose *misfortune* it is to have slaves as attendants will visit the City if they can possibly avoid it; because by so doing they hazard their property—or they must be at the expence (& this will not always succeed) of providing servants of another description for the trip.

I hope it will not be conceived from these observations, that it is my wish to hold the unhappy people who are the subject of this letter, in slavery. I can only say that there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a plan adopted for the abolition of it—but there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be accomplished, & that is by Legislative authority: and this, as far as my suffrage will go, shall never be wanting.

But when slaves who are happy & content to remain with their present masters, are tampered with & seduced to leave them; when masters are taken at unawares by these practices; when a conduct of this sort begets discontent on one side and resentment on the other, & when it happens to fall on a man whose purse will not measure with that of the Society, & he looses his property for want of means to defend it—it is oppression in the latter case, & not humanity in any; because it introduces more evils that it can cure. I will make no apology for writing to you on this subject; for it Mr Dalby has not misconceived the matter, an evil exists which requires a remedy; if he has, my intentions have been good though I may have been too precipitate in this address. Mrs Washington joins me in every good & kind wish for Mrs Morris & your family, and I am &c.

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 593–94.

Questions for Group Five to consider:

1. How does Washington regard Quakers who are striving to abolish slavery?

2. According to Washington, how is one to interpret his silence on the issue?

3. According to Washington's views, what are the proper steps Quakers should take to secure the end of slavery?

4. How would you interpret Washington's letter to Robert Morris?

WASHINGTON'S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

July 9, 1799

In the name of God amen

I GEORGE WASHINGTON of Mount Vernon, a citizen of the United States, and lately President of the same, do make, ordain and declare this Instrument; which is written with my own hand and every page thereof subscribed with my name, to be my last Will and Testament, revoking all others.

Imprimus. All my debts, of which there are but few, and none of magnitude, are to be punctually and speedily paid; and the Legacies hereinafter bequeathed, are to be discharged as soon as circumstances will permit, and in the manner directed.

Item. To my dearly beloved wife Martha Washington I give and bequeath the use, profit and benefit of my whole Estate, real and personal, for the term of her natural life; except such parts thereof as are specifically disposed of hereafter: My improved lot in the Town of Alexandria, situated on Pitt and Cameron Streets, I give to her and her heirs forever, as I also do my household and Kitchen furniture of every sort and kind, with the liquors and groceries which may be on hand at the time of my decease; to be used and disposed of as she may think proper.

Item. Upon the decease of my wife, it is my Will and desire that all the Slaves which I hold in my own right, shall receive their freedom. To emancipate them during her life, would, tho' earnestly wished by me, be attended with such insuperable difficulties on account of their intermixture by Marriages with the Dower Negroes, as to excite the most painful sensations, if not disagreeable consequences from the latter, while both descriptions are in the occupancy of the same Proprietor; it not being in my power, under the tenure by which the Dower Negros are held, to manumit them. And whereas among those who will receive freedom according to this devise, there may be some, who from old age or bodily infirmities, and others who on account of their infancy, that will be unable to support themselves; it is my Will and desire that all who come under the first and second description shall be comfortably cloathed and fed by my heirs while they live; and that such of the latter description as have no parents living, or if living are unable, or unwilling to provide for them, shall be bound by the Court until they shall arrive at the age of twenty five years; and in cases where no record can be produced, whereby their ages can be ascertained, the judgment of the Court upon its own view of the subject, shall be adequate and final. The Negros thus bound, are (by their Masters or Mistresses) to be taught to read and write; and to be brought up to some useful occupation, agreeably to the Laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, providing for the support of Orphan and other poor Children. And I do hereby expressly forbid the Sale, or transportation out of the said Commonwealth, of any Slave I may die possessed of, under any presence whatsoever. And I do moreover most pointedly, and most solemnly enjoin it upon my Executors hereafter named, or the Survivors of them, to see that this clause respecting Slaves, and every part thereof be religiously fulfilled at the Epoch at which it is directed to take place; without evasion, neglect or delay, after the Crops which may then be on the ground are harvested, particularly as it respects the aged and infirm; Seeing that a regular and permanent fund be established for their Support so long as there are subjects requiring it; not trusting to the uncertain provision to be made by individuals. And to my Mulatto man William (calling himself William Lee) I give immediate freedom; or if he should prefer it (on account of the accidents which have befallen him, and which have rendered him incapable of walking or of any active employment) to remain in the situation he now is, it shall be optional in him to do so: In either case however, I allow him an annuity of thirty dollars during his natural life, which shall be independent of the victuals and cloaths he has been accustomed to receive, if he chuses the last alternative; but in full, with his freedom, if he prefers the first; and this I give him as a testimony of my sense of his attachment to me, and for his faithful services during the Revolutionary War. . . .

Source: Washington, *Writings*, selected by John H. Rhodehamel, pp. 1022–24.

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Washington left a bequest to each of his sisters-in-law for the purchase of a mourning ring as a remembrance.

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